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BY NED BUNTLINE

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OLD SIB CONE, THE MOUNTAIN TRAPPER.

BY NED BUNTLINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE HUNTING PARTY.

It was a lovely evening, in the beginning of September, 1841. The declining sun looked upon as desolate a scene as could well be imagined in that lovely region, the prairies of the Far West. As far as the eye could reach, nothing was to be seen but a dry and barren plain, stretching away to meet the embrace of the distant horizon. The grass was short, and embrowned by the melting summer sun, which, in that distant region, often shines for weeks unclouded, drinking up the moisture from the earth, and with it, its consequent vitality. For weeks, ay, months, no rain had fallen. Unclouded days and dewless nights had followed in their burning cycle; and the plain lay parched, and gasping for its cool drink, like one with a raging fever. Not a shrub, or bush, not even a tuft of grass, broke the sameness which everywhere met the vision. Silence and desolation seemed there to reign together. Not an insect chirped—not a bird flew by; nothing was heard, nothing moved; but there that lonely plain lay, like a stagnant ocean, basking in the light of a September sun.

The plain was one of many which extend almost uninterruptedly from Council Grove to the base of the far-distant mountains, near Santa Fe—a region of country which has nothing to exceed it for wildness and sterility on the whole continent of America. Covered with the short buffalo-grass in places furrowed by tremendous chasms—and again dotted with hills of shifting sand—the hunting-ground of the Comanches and other prairie tribes—the home of millions of buffaloes, antelopes, and deer—no wonder it is called the “Great Desert” by the whites, but by the Indians is looked upon as the paradise of hunters.

Springs, or streams of running water, are rarely to be met with, and when found are generally the camping-ground of roving bands of Indians, the Bedouins of the West, whose hands are raised against every white man, as every white man's against them. It is a land of plenty, and of want; of destitution, and of beauty; of life, and of death.

The sun was sinking slowly in the west. His beams had already lost much of their mid-day vigor, and the coolness of the yet distant night seemed creeping over the parched-up plain. As yet the scene was silent, and deserted; not an object moved; not a breath was heard; but yonder on a line with the setting sun, is something faintly distinguishable in the distance. It is so far away, that the unpracticed eye could scarcely notice it, so faintly and so small did it appear, cutting the horizon.

In a few minutes the object became much more distinct and what was at first an almost moveless point, soon changed into the heavy roll of a solitary buffalo. As the animal became more distinct, it seemed to be pursued by some enemy not yet in view; for with head advanced, and long and powerful leaps, it pursued its steady course across the plain, without for one moment lessening its headlong speed. The cause of its alarm soon became apparent. Immediately in the wake of the fleeing buffalo appeared two objects, advancing rapidly in pursuit. A few moments sufficed to ascertain that they were horsemen; but whether Indians or not, could not as yet be distinguished.

The pursuers were rapidly gaining upon their victim, who, now aware that it was a race for life or death, strained his utmost to escape. But all his efforts seemed in vain; already they were at his heels; and one, dashing up to the flying bull, ran for a few moments side by side with the animal, when a thin puff of smoke, followed by a sharp report, told that the rifle had already commenced the deadly game. This only served as a goad to spur the buffalo to still greater exertions. Another flash, followed by another report, told that the second pursuer had commenced his share in the sport. Still, with unabated speed, the now severely-wounded animal kept on his way. Nearer and nearer came the pursued and the pursuers; the horsemen had fallen off a little in order to reload; but

this respite was only for a few seconds; dashing up to the right of the fleeing game, their rifles again shot forth deadly charges, but apparently without in the least lessening the speed of their victim. They had now approached so near that the form and bearing of the hunters could easily be distinguished. They were both white, dressed in the garb of mountain men—buckskin hunting-shirt and pants—and mounted upon the keen, active horses of the prairies. The bull, though severely wounded, still kept on with unabated speed the bloody foam dropping from his open mouth, and his small red eyes glaring fiercely from his shaggy front. Again the hunters dashed upon him, pouring in their fire, but this time with more success; the huge animal, feeling the balls tearing through his vitals, and lashed into madness by the smarting pain, turned suddenly upon his pursuers, and with one desperate bound, caught the nearest horse upon his short and massive horns, tossing him and his rider for several yards, as if they were but playthings. The other hunter had been more wary, and now seeing the mishap of his companion, and the enraged bull springing to renew the attack, with a quick and dexterous maneuver, spurred his horse right in the face of the maddened beast, and with a sudden whirl of his blanket, which he had drawn from under him, succeeded in turning the attention of the bull upon himself. His plan was now to lead the buffalo as far as possible from the spot where his companion lay, motionless and insensible, under the quivering body of his horse, and his maneuvering to accomplish this was most admirable—showing him to be an old hand at this most dangerous sport. When the bull would stop, seeing the almost hopelessness of catching his antagonist, the hunter would dash forward, as if upon his very horns, waving his many-colored sarape in the very eyes of the beast, and ere the bull could make his plunge, was off again like the wind; yet taking care, by the closeness of his position, to lead the buffalo in pursuit. It was a thrilling sight to see that wild and lonely contest. The bull was bleeding from numerous wounds, his heart's blood was oozing from his side and marking every step he took on the stunted grass; yet his eye was as untamed as ever, and fixed with burning hatred upon his lithe opponent, who, now here, now there, threaten-

ing at every point, yet attacking at none, completely paralyzed every attempt of the wounded animal.

In the course of a few minutes, his efforts in drawing away the bull from the neighborhood of his companion were entirely successful; then, withdrawing to a short distance, his rifle was quickly reloaded, and taking a sure and steady aim at the fiery eye of the bull, he sent the ball far into his brain; one full gasp for breath, and the huge beast sunk, quivering, dead upon the plain.

To relieve his companion was his next business, whom he found feebly endeavoring to free himself from the body of his stiffening horse; a few moments sufficed for setting him at liberty; he was safe and sound, with the exception of a few trifling bruises, and a dizziness consequent to his strained position.

"Well, Fritz, I have certainly had a narrow escape," exclaimed the overthrown hunter, as he took a hasty view of the field of battle. "Though I feel sore in body with my own bruises, and sad in mind, to see my fine hunter so terribly maltreated, yet I can not help smiling when I think of the ludicrous somerset I took. I acknowledge myself conquered in my first bull-fight. I had no idea it was such a *beheading* business, or I would have remembered more particularly the injunction of the Doctor, 'to beware of stiff *horns*,' which I thought he always intended to be taken in a *spiritual* sense."

"I am sorry, indeed, Mr. Norwood, at your mishap, but am glad to see you take it so coolly. This is your first introduction to buffalo-hunting, and it has been a rough one. Experience will do you good; and in your next chase you will probably remember the Doctor's horns; but it is getting late, and it is yet some distance to camp. Mount my horse, and let us be off."

"You are right—it is late, but first let me take the saddle off my poor Pinto. Poor fellow!—you have carried me many a mile, and it grieves me to let your body now become a feast for wolves. If it had not been for my awkwardness, you would not have met this untimely fate!"

While the latter was busily engaged taking his "kit" from the stiff body of his dead Pinto, and fastening them on his companion's horse, Fritz, the other, was cutting some of the

best slices from the carcass of the buffalo, to take to camp; but as the bull was poor and old, his principal selections were the tongue, liver, and a couple of shank-bones, for the sake of the marrow.

All things being prepared, Fritz, with the "meat" inclosed in a piece of the raw hide, slung on his shoulder, and the other on horseback, carrying the two rifles, started in a northern direction, almost at right-angles with the course where they first appeared chasing the buffalo. The latter, who was called "Mr. Norwood" by his companion, was a young man, apparently about twenty-five. He was of a good height, with a firm, elastic build; his whole make was what one might call "manly," with every muscle well developed, and every limb firmly hinged. His face was prepossessing in the extreme, one of those that always take us at first sight, with the sedate, open expression of an honest heart; one of those faces, in fact, which one would always choose, had they a request to make, or a good action to be performed. His complexion *once* was fair, but the sun had embrowned it somewhat, giving more vigor to the expression of his countenance. His chin was decorated with a short, curling beard, and a slight moustache gave something of a stern appearance to his whole face. His dress was a buckskin hunting-shirt, plentifully fringed, and pants of the same material; moccasins, beautifully "beaded," covered his feet; on his head was a felt hat of a brownish hue, elongated into a sugar-loaf appearance, by the elevation of the crown; the rim over the left ear was fastened to the side of the hat by means of a small silver button, from which depended a little tassel of sky-blue silk. His arms consisted of a long, heavy rifle, richly mounted, a pair of pistols, and a large bowie-knife firmly secured to his belt; these, with the usual accompaniments of powder-horn and bullet-pouch, completed his equipment.

The other, his companion, who walked alongside, was similarly clothed in buckskin, but which, instead of presenting the yellow and clean appearance of the former, appeared to have been long accustomed to wind and weather. He was of a much slighter build than his companion, and not as tall by two inches; but in every movement there was that cat-like agility which in any emergency would give him the ad-

vantage over stronger and abler opponents. His face would have been humane, were it not for a large scar on his right cheek, extending from the cheek-bone to the point of the chin, and, in its course, cutting deep into the corner of the mouth. This gave to his countenance a kind of forbidding look, which, however, the quiet humor within his full gray eye in a measure removed. His head-dress consisted of a red silk handkerchief, folded in the manner of a turban, with the ends knotted and hanging over the right ear, which gave a gay and holiday appearance to his figure. His age scarcely exceeded that of the other; the sun and tempest had bronzed his cheek, showing that his days had been spent amid the vicissitudes of a hunter's life. He was a real specimen of the mountain trapper—one whose whole existence had been among dangers and difficulties, and whose chief pleasure was the excitement of so hazardous a life. Known everywhere among the mountain-men by no other name than "Fritz," his character among such wild associates was proverbial for every thing that constituted a true friend, and one that was first in an Indian "fight," and the last to retreat.

By the time they had fairly started on their return to camp, the sun was beginning to hide his golden disk in the plain, and the cold blue of the approaching night was already seen climbing up the eastern sky. Fritz increased his pace, so that the horse of his companion was put to a kind of half-trot and walk to keep up. Norwood, who appeared to be in a deep reverie, was at last aroused by an exclamation from Fritz:

"What is it?" asked he, as he noticed his companion intently looking at a pile of buffalo-bones some distance in advance, and which appeared to have taken all Fritz's attention.

"I will tell you in a moment," exclaimed the latter, who, arriving at the object, halted and examined it for a little while with singular scrutiny. At last, appearing satisfied with his observation, he turned to Norwood, who was watching his actions with attention, and pointing to the object before him, exclaimed:

"That is a 'sign,' an Inj'n sign, and but lately erected—Arapahoes at that; but what they can be doing away on this

side of the little Arkansas, is more than I can imagine: probably after the Osages; there is more than one party, and quite a crowd of them, I assure you; we must keep a sharp look-out, or there will be hair taken. A party of them passed by this place to-day, but from this sign they were not going in the direction of our camp; that would be very satisfactory if there were no others roaming about."

"But how can you tell," replied the other, "from this heap of bones, that Indians passed here to-day, and Arapahoes at that?"

"Nothing so easy to one that has lived so many years among them. Do you see the position of that bull's skull? It looks toward the direction they have taken. The position of the horns shows that it is a war-party, and the peculiar arrangement of these legs, or rather marrow-bones, tells what tribe they belonged to. This sign is intended as a guide for some other party of the same band that had separated, and upon seeing this, will read as in a book how many days since their comrades have passed, and every thing else that concerns them to know. Come, let us on to camp; we have a good distance yet to travel, and traveling after night, over such a plain, when we have no landmarks, is not so pleasant."

"It can't be far to camp," replied Norwood. "We certainly have not been many hours out; nevertheless, I would like to taste some of the Doctor's cookery, for I assure you that flying somerset I took has settled my stomach completely. I am sorry for the mishap, since by it I have lost my poor Pinto, and if I had not another horse at camp, would certainly be bad enough off. How the Doctor's mouth will water at the sight of your load of meat! I never saw such a gourmand in my life; he is always talking about and inventing new dishes. No wonder he wanted to accompany me on my Western trip, when you happened to mention in his presence the sweetness of a buffalo-tongue and marrow-bone, and the delicate eating of the hump of a fat cow! But since he is with us, we must give him his fill; it is better to bear with his gluttony than his complaints."

"Oh! the Doctor will do well enough; he is a jolly companion," replied Fritz; "but as to that English captain, I don't like him at all; he is always complaining about the Yankee,

making fun of our peculiarities, as he calls it, and then dotting into that book of his every thing he sees or hears. He may be a fine fellow enough in his own way, but he doesn't suit me, not by a jug-full; and then he is always boasting of his bravery, and what he'll do if Injins dare molest us. He may talk that way now, because he has never been in a fight; but we'll see what his nerves are made of some of these days --and *then* let him talk to us about fightin' Injins."

"My dear Fritz, you are too severe on the Captain; he is a fine fellow, I assure you; to be sure, his manners are overbearing; but I speak from my own personal knowledge, when I say he is a true friend at heart. He likes his country—who don't? he thinks there is but little to admire out of England, and being of this opinion, he says some hard things of us Yankees. *This* I don't like altogether; but as to the rest of his peculiarities, they are those of his people, which I can willingly overlook. Selfishness is a garment which they only put on when traveling abroad; at home, they are kind and hospitable, and have none of that churlishness which makes them so unpalatable in other countries. I noticed that you were touched to the quick several times by some of his critical allusions, and I resolved to take the first opportunity to talk to you, and beg of you not to mind his words, for I assure you he is already your warm and sincere friend. I became acquainted with him in New York, and learning of my intention to take a trip across the prairies, he requested to be one of my party; so you see, here we are, some two or three hundred miles from Independence; wandering over the desert, just as fancy dictates, and entirely under your direction. We want to see a little prairie life, and under your tutelage, I have sufficient vanity to suppose I will yet become an expert hunter, notwithstanding my unlucky *début* to-day.

"As to the Doctor," he continued, seeing that Fritz did not reply, "he took this trip for the benefit of science. He has read of so many curiosities in this wild country, that no dangers could deter him from seeing for himself—especially as he considers it entirely done for the benefit of science. I would not have wanted his company for any price, for though he grumbles a good deal at the toil of traveling through such a melting heat, yet when arrived at camp, he is all bustle and

anxiety till coffee is prepared, and then he is good-nature itself."

It was now quite dark, and the howling of the wolves was heard on every side, adding a still greater sense of loneliness to the dreariness of the scene. Fritz kept in advance of the horse, and though carrying a quantity of meat, moved along with a rapid trot, which in him required no more exertion than if on an ordinary walk. Norwood, to whom he had been recommended as a guide and companion, often wondered at the tireless activity and strength of so slight a form. In his sagacity and courage, he had every confidence; but more than all, he admired him for certain sterling qualities of heart, which he certainly did not expect in one whose whole life had been passed amid scenes of strife and bloodshed. This esteem increased every day, so that now he almost regarded him as a brother, and often regretted that such fine qualities should be wasted in so solitary and unprofitable a life.

However, if Fritz had known his thoughts to be such regarding his manner of life, he would certainly have considered them any thing but satisfactory. He was only one of many who preferred this dangerous yet free existence to that of civilized society, where every thing is squared by conventional rules. A hunter's, or rather trapper's life, though one of infinite peril, has something in its wandering freedom so charming, that when one becomes accustomed to it, so free of restraint, and so exciting from its danger, no other kind of existence can be at all satisfactory. Such are its charms, that men brought up in affluence, polished in manners, and well educated, have been known to give up every thing for the untrammelled life of the prairies. If Fritz therefore preferred this kind of existence to any other, he was only doing what others, who had every thing to expect from their position in society, has done before him.

It was an hour or so after dark, when Fritz gave notice to his companion that they were approaching camp. Norwood, at this, recalled his wandering thoughts; but as yet he could distinguish nothing but the apparently unbroken plain, now dim and dismal with the shades of night. On a sudden, he appeared to be upon the edge of an immense chasm, and it was some time ere his eye could pierce the almost impene-

tra de obscurity below. Following with his eye the direction of Fritz's arm, he at last recognized the locality—and far beneath, as if coming from another world, he distinguished the flickering flame of the camp-fire. After a dangerous and precipitate descent to the narrow valley below, Norwood at last found himself safe in the arms of the Doctor, who, upon hearing the well-known shout of Fritz, had come forth to meet them.

"Ah! you're here at last!" he exclaimed, as he assisted his bruised companion to dismount. "Fritz says you nearly became food for the wild beasts. God preserve me from such a fate!"

"Ah, Doctor!" exclaimed Norwood, "no such fate will ever happen to you; your carcass is even too ponderous for an enraged bull to overturn, and such are the only enemies to be dreaded, unless we happen on a band of Indians; and then, Doctor, look to your body—it will make a fine target to shoot at. But what in the name of common sense are you fingering at there?—taking out your case of instruments, as I'm alive! Why, Doctor, there's nothing the matter with me, I assure you; only a little soreness from a few slight bruises; and these will be entirely doctored by a good supper."

"Well, now," exclaimed the other, "I am truly glad to hear it; but speaking of supper puts me in mind of what you went after; meat, that's it; good, fresh, buffalo-meat. Did you get any, eh? Charley Norwood, what do you say? My stomach has been hungering after it ever since we got into the buffalo country. Desire has thinned me awfully. I'm not the same man I used to be."

The Doctor's jeremiads were, however, cut short by Fritz coming forward and unburdening himself of his load.

"There, Doctor, don't be grieving; there's grease for those ribs of yours! Come, you and I'll be cooks. Maybe I can learn you something about roasting marrow-bones."

While the two were busy heaping dry wood upon the fire, Norwood, spreading a buffalo-robe upon the grass, and making a pillow of his saddle, endeavored, in vain, to snatch a few minutes' repose. His limbs ached awfully, and then the chattering of the Doctor and Fritz, at their occupation, would have banished sleep from more weary eyes than his. Seeing

that all his efforts were useless, he seated himself by the fire endeavoring to draw his mind from the contemplation of his wounds by observing the activity with which the Doctor moved his dumpy legs around the savory mess, and the heartfelt complacency pictured on his round and rosy face.

"What have you done with the Captain?" inquired Norwood, seeing that his form was nowhere to be seen among the fixtures of the camp.

"Is it the Captain you are inquiring about?" replied the Doctor, as he paused to wipe the perspiration from his glowing face. "The Captain?—where should he be but among the mules; they are his fit companions. I never knew an Englishman, but one, that didn't insult his company, and he was an Irishman. The Captain is a bear—a perfect *ignomramus*—*he* write a book!—he doesn't know the difference between osteology and bones! He's an *ozena*—an ulcer on the nose of science!"

After giving giving vent to his opinion of the Captain—every word of which was accompanied by an oratorical swing of a large saucepan that he happened to have in his hand, and which he flourished round his head as a lawyer would his brief—he betook himself again to his occupation of preparing supper, which, under his and Fritz's management, was soon spread smoking hot upon the grass, near enough to the fire, so that its light served the place of a lamp. While the Doctor was on his knees, pouring out the coffee into the tin cups, Fritz started to the spring, which was a little distance off, to call the Captain. The Doctor, in the meantime, was all impatience; how his little gray eyes watered at the sight of the two marrow-bones! and how the smell of the nicely-fried liver made his thick, snubby nose tingle with anticipated delights! But no man is sure of his dinner until it is within him; and the Doctor was about to be another exemplification of the truth of that old maxim, "There's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip."

A sudden noise was heard in the direction of their cavallada. The animals appeared to be in great fright, snorting, and prancing about the prairie.

"A stampede!" exclaimed Norwood, as he sprung to his feet, forgetting the pain of his bruises in his anxiety.

"A what, did you say, Charley?" cried the Doctor, still kneeling, with his hand upon the coffee-pot, and with the most abject terror pictured upon his countenance, as his ears drank in the unusual sounds. "Is it Indians, Charley?" he again inquired, as the noise became louder and louder.

Now the Doctor, who, in all his readings, had never come across such a word as stampede, was terribly alarmed. His imagination could only picture out some huge, ferocious, and nondescript animal, that had attacked the mules and horses, and would probably finish its supper on him. Staring into the darkness as if his eyes could read a thousand horrible shapes in every sound, and the feeling coming over him that he was alone, no wonder that awful sensation.

He felt "rather frightened," as he owned afterward. But, though the Doctor was "so skeered," he still had sufficient recollection to know that self-preservation was the first law of nature. Snatching a marrow-bone in each hand, off he darted with the most astonishing velocity, in a contrary direction to the noise, and at every leap imagining the dreadful and unknown "stampede" at his heels!

In a few minutes every thing was again quiet; the deserted fire still burned brightly—casting, however, but a faint light into the surrounding darkness. On a sudden, a voice was heard at a little distance, exclaiming:

"Git along, you cussed old critter!—what are you afeard of?"

This was quickly followed by a half-dozen heavy kicks, apparently upon the ribs of some animal, to enforce the rider's meaning.

"Come along, Dutch!" the same voice went on; "come along, my little 'un—just foller me. I'll pectect ye—who's afeard? Injuns ain't worse than bein' lost, I know. Cuss sich a dod-darned country, I say!"

In a few moments, a tall, lank figure, mounted on a half-starved mule, was seen emerging from the darkness, followed by another personage directly the reverse of the former, and likewise bestriding rather a hungry-looking animal. It was an almost second edition of the Knight of the Woeful Countenance, and his jolly squire. As soon as the tall unknown had reached the fire, he very leisurely dismounted; and taking the

saddle off his mule, turned him adrift to manage for the night. Then divesting himself of his powder-horn and bullet-pouch, which, together with his long, domestic-looking rifle, he placed beside his saddle, he took an "observation" of the various articles surrounding the fire. Appearing perfectly satisfied with the sight, he turned to his follower, who yet remained perched upon his mule, and with that peculiar Yankee twang so hard to describe, exclaimed:

"Git down!—why don't you git down and let your critter rest? Look thar!" he continued, seeing his companion had obeyed, and pointing with his long and bony arm to the supper, which remained where the Doctor had placed it. "Look thar!—thar's a supper for a hungry belly!—real Injun cakes!—what I haven't seen since I left old Long's at Independence. Jeremiah, what coffee!" he continued, as, seating himself, he gulped down a whole cup-full at a draught. "These fellers knows how to live; must be from old Missouri, I guess. Here, Dutch, come and eat—no ceremony in these diggin's—every man for himself!"

"Dutch," as he called him, no ways loth, followed suit; and between them, threatened in a short time to entirely demolish the Doctor's cookery. The tall unknown was dressed in coat and pants of Kentucky jean; upon his head was one of those small woolen caps, in shape and appearance like a night-cap; on the apex was a little round ball of wool, which gave it the appearance of a miniature church tower. He had an elongated face, thin and dry; with a large, hawk-like nose, and small eyes, hid under a mass of overhanging brows. His whole countenance was of the sleepy, sanctimonious kind—one that would make the fortune of a church elder. "Dutch," his companion, was rather diminutive, with a broad, good-natured countenance, seeming the very antithesis of the other. He had on an old frock-coat, which was once blue, but now changed to many colors, by various patches which had been sewed on without any regard for the dye of the original garment. His short legs were incased in buckskin pants, dirty and greasy by long use. On his feet were moccasins made of green buffalo-hide, and his head was protected by a low-crowned, broad-brimmed chip hat, giving to his whole person a squeezed-up appearance. The two sat side by side,

devouring the well-cooked victuals as uncereimoniously as if prepared for themselves alone.

When in the very midst of their labors, a third face was seen peeping from behind a pile of saddles, and gazing with a blank look of astonishment and fear at the two intruders. It was the fat, full visage of the Doctor, who, seeing he was not pursued by the stampede, after running till out of breath, and hearing no more of the alarming noise, had ventured slowly and cautiously back to camp. Distinguishing two figures at the fire, the first impression was that they were of his own party; but a few steps served to dispel his illusion; and with much trembling, and after various attempts, he had at last mustered sufficient courage to crawl up to within a few yards, where, favored by a heap of buffalo-robes, he could gaze without fear of detection.

It would be vain to attempt to describe the Doctor's feelings, when he saw two such uncouth figures quietly seated at the fire, and helping themselves with great gusto to the good things set before them. How his eyes dilated to a wonderful extent—watched every motion, and saw with horror the rapidity with which a whole heap of fried liver disappeared in the cavernous mouth of that long, lank, unearthly-looking figure! He groaned in very spirit at the thought that none of that fresh buffalo-meat, which he had cooked so deliciously, would be left for him. But there was no help for it; his fears would not permit him to expose himself; and there he lay, extended on the grass, with his round, white face peeping from behind his breastwork, and every now and then jerking it down, as he thought the eyes of the tall unknown were directed toward him.

The Doctor suffered woefully; but his feelings were soon relieved in a measure, by hearing the well-known voices of his friends on their return. Starting on a sudden from his hiding-place, he ran forth to meet them, and catching Norwood by the arm with one hand, while with the other he pointed to the strangers at the fire, exclaimed:

"See there, Charley Norwood, see there, what comes of your running away! Supper's done for; all my good cooking gone, vanished *in cavernis*—and whose fault is it? You wouldn't stay to watch it—that infernal stampede frightened you away, all of you—and I—"

"You ran away too," replied Norwood, who laughed long and heartily at the woeful countenance and excited gestures of the Doctor. In the mean time they had approached the fire, where the two worthies were just finishing the Doctor's cookery.

"Wal, strangers," said the long unknown, rising to his feet and stretching himself to his full hight, "supper's over, but I guess thar's some left. Hyer's wun, and thar's another, that hain't seen white man since wun week to-day. Jeremiah! what a time we've had, ranging over the hull country to find our way out! Some days we eat some, and some days we didn't; that

was just owin' to what we got. No water nuther; cuss sich a dod-darned country! whar wun can't git out of sight without bein' lost! Lost, did I say? yes! wuss nor lost!—starved, and dried for keeping! Strangers, you won't have objections to our stoppin' with you over night?"

It was impossible to resist so pathetic an appeal; and when our party found that they had been lost, and almost starved, even the Doctor, in his charity, volunteered to cook another supper. The fire was heaped up again with wood, pans and kettles were put in requisition, and soon the whole party was seated upon the grass, discussing the good things of a prairie-larder. The Captain, who was a middle-aged and good-looking little fellow, descended from his dignity, and with the greatest good-humor, helped the Doctor to discuss his marrow-bones, which he had taken particular care of in his flight. The tall unknown, who called himself "'Ziah," was again persuaded to "help himself," and was particularly attended to by Fritz. Dutch and Pasqual, the mule-boy, seemed to be old acquaintances by the way they jabbered; and Norwood, himself scarcely felt any soreness in his bones, having exercised himself endeavoring to pacify the frightened animals. When supper was over, and Pasqual was "cleaning up," the Doctor, who felt inexpressibly happy, went to one of the packs, and produced a good-sized bottle, which Fritz averred contained the "Doctor's horns"; this was passed from one to another, until it had taken the rounds, and was declared "spiritless" by the Doctor. Merriment was the order of the night, and even the serious countenance of 'Ziah relaxed somewhat at the unaccustomed conviviality. Night was far advanced ere they rolled themselves in their blankets to sleep; all but Fritz and Norwood, who watched alternately on guard till daylight.

CHAPTER II.

A CHANGE OF CAMP.

THE whole party rose bright and early; and by the time the sun was up, had breakfasted, and were saddling their animals for a move. The place where they had formed their camp a few days since, and which the party was now preparing to leave, was on one of those small creeks that empty into the Arkansas far on this side of the "crossings." It was several miles south of the Santa Fe trail, and far enough removed from the usual course of Indians to render it safe; and as Fritz expected when he brought them there, would afford delightful hunting. But much to their disappointment, no signs of buffalo were to be met with; and they had concluded to move their camp to the Arkansas, on the next day after we have introduced them to the

reader. It was in consequence, therefore, of their previous arrangement, that all hands were up, and preparing for an early start.

Their camping-place was in a narrow valley, or rather dell, through which flowed the creek, now reduced to half its size by the long-continued drought. At a little distance was a clump of cottonwood trees, and willows, surrounding a spring of clear water that issued from the side of the bluff, and emptied itself into the little creek. This narrow valley was scarce fifty yards across; on either side the bank, or bluff, rose for more than a hundred feet, in some places almost perpendicularly, the sides of which were covered with short, stunted grass. It was a beautiful and lonely retreat, and Norwood was so enchanted with its bewitching quietness that he thought his life might there be spent, without a single regret for the busy world which he had so lately left. The whole party moved up the side of the opposite bluff, which, after some difficulty with the baggage-mules, was safely accomplished. 'Ziah and Dutch concluded they had better accompany Norwood's party, it being in vain to attempt regaining the caravan to which they were attached, and which must now be at least a hundred miles away, on its course to Santa Fe. Besides, even if they were willing to seek their way back to the settlements, Norwood would not have permitted it, for he was well aware, from what Fritz had said, that Indians were about; and it was a matter of astonishment to him that the two wanderers had not been picked up by some of their roving bands.

When they were all collected together on the bluff above, the party made quite an imposing, if not martial appearance. 'Ziah was peculiarly impressive. Mounted on a lank, slab-sided mule, with his long legs thrust into the iron stirrups, his feet extended far in front of the mule's fore-legs, with the toes stuck toward the heavens, and a corresponding downward direction of the heels, his body erect, as stiff and jointless as a rail—with his church-like countenance—yet ever wandering eye—carrying his long, home-made-stocked rifle before him on the saddle—no wonder he was *the* one of the party; a distinction that he took very complacently. The Doctor seemed particularly to admire him; probably from the exhibition of his immense gastric powers on the preceding evening—or it might be from that singular attraction that always brings dissimilar spirits into close connection; but whatever the cause was, the Doctor and he soon became so intimate as to attract the attention of Fritz, who remarked, in his quiet, humorous way, that "the world would never more suffer from want, as Famine and Plenty were journeying hand in hand."

The course they traveled was nearly in the direction of Norwood's place of adventure with the bull—over a barren and apparently boundless plain. The day promised to be very warm,

for the sun rose clear and brassy, and not a puff of air had yet greeted them on their early excursion. Many an anxious eye did the Doctor cast toward the sky, mentally praying that a cloud might arise to give him some hopes of a mitigation of the threatened mid-day heat; but every thing wore the appearance of a "mighty all-fired hot day," as 'Ziah termed it, and the Doctor's flesh began already to suffer in anticipation of what was to come.

"Well, Doctor," exclaimed the Captain, ranging his mule alongside, "examining the pulse of the weather?—how is it?—does it promise an increase of fever? If I might dare to be taken into your consultation, I would by all means propose a shower-bath, with wet blankets hung over the sun. What say you to my prescription?"

"It would be the very thing," replied the other, "if we had a bull's gall for a cathartic."

"There, now, none of your insinuations," exclaimed the Captain, a little nettled. "You Yankees are always insulting. But this is owing to your bringing up in a kind of savage state, without being blessed by gentlemanly society. I never saw any thing good in your country yet, unless it was the Doctors; and they were always good—for nothing!"

It was now the Doctor's turn to feel himself insulted. The color mounted to his face, until it seemed ready to burst with concentrated anger; his fat legs were convulsively agitated, by which his mule was the sufferer, by sundry violent kicks from the rider's spasmodic affection. There is no telling what the Doctor in his wrath might not have been prompted to do, had it not been for the interference of 'Ziah—who hitherto had been a calm observer of the dispute—but, now, seeing the agitation of his friend, the Doctor, of whose knowledge he seemed to have a wonderful impression, and not being at all pleased at the Captain's wholesale insinuation against the Yankees, thought it consistent to take a part in the discussion. Giving his long legs a hitch in the stirrups, and straightening himself on his saddle, he turned to the Captain, and with a knowing look, commenced:

"Look hyer!—you feller!—maybe you're an Englishman. Wal, my advice is, that you oughter be kinder gentle. You're too little to talk so big; the Yankees is good for bull-baitin', any time. I know'd an Englishman wunce in our town, but he was bigger 'an you, and one of our little boys knocked his hind sights entirely off, 'cos he called him 'Brother Jonathan;' a relationship he didn't like, nohow! But I'm for peace—my name is Nezhiah Peace—and the hull shute of my forefathers were of the same breed. I was always a peace-maker at hum—which was wunce in Connecticut, but is now in Missouri—and I want to be a peace-maker everywhar. But wun thing I won't stand; it riles me considerable to hear these United

States run down so by foreign Englishmen. So you see, Captain, if you want to have peace on your side, say nuthin' about the Yankees; they are the very dickens in a scrouge, and gouge considerable!"

This address—which took Neziah Peace a longer time to deliver than us to write, and which he enforced with a perpendicular motion of his feet, which kept moving up and down in front of his mule—had the desired effect. The Captain, satisfied that he could make nothing out of him, spurred his mule, and joined Norwood and Fritz, who were some distance in advance. The Doctor could not recover his equanimity for some time, notwithstanding the soothing expressions of 'Ziah. The hit of the Captain's was too severe, and he determined to return it with interest at some future time.

The sun becoming warmer as the day advanced, made them quicken their pace, so as to arrive at their "nooning" place before the heat would become too overpowering—and where Fritz averred they would find plenty of good water and grass, but no "shade;" which last intelligence was any thing but satisfactory to the Doctor, as the sun began to tell upon him with powerful effect.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed, as for the fiftieth time he endeavored with his well-saturated handkerchief to keep the sweat from blinding him; "ugh! but it's hot! I verily believe I'll melt! 'Ziah, you can possibly appreciate my feelings. The sun glances off your body—there's nothing there to hold it—quite a non-conductor; but me—the sun feeds on me. I know not how it is, but my flesh had always an affinity for heat; that's one of the mysteries of science. I tell you, friend, I'm a martyr to my love of science; if it had not been for my pure and disinterested affection therefor, I wouldn't have been here; not I! Do you think I would run the risk of being dried up, and starved?—not mentioning the danger to my scalp from the savages—if I had not been impelled by my love of knowledge? I have always been a lover of knowledge—a seeker after the recondite, the *arcana sapientiæ*—and all for the benefit of my fellow-beings. It is this that makes me bear up so manfully against the inconveniences of traveling in this desert region; of which heat and hunger are the greatest. Ah! my dear friend, never be one of the worshipers of science; if you do, you'll grow big with anxiety, and you'll never be happy, never! Ugh! how hot it is! Walstaff's sufferings were nothing to mine!"

But, notwithstanding the Doctor's lamentation, the sun would grow hotter, and the perspiration would continue streaming from every part of his body. It was in vain that he unbuttoned his light summer-coat, then took it off; loosened his cravat, and elevated his oil-cloth-covered Panama; nothing that he could do to his dress—no change that he could make in his method of riding—would give him the least relief. Often did his eyes

roam around, in the vain effort to distinguish a tree or bush, or even a tuft of grass, whose very appearance would have been a relief. On every side was the level, parched-up plain, as smooth and as hard as a Russ pavement, apparently limitless in extent; and above was the unclouded, brassy sky, glowing like the vault of a furnace. Even the others began to think "this was one of the hot days," as well as the Doctor; and Norwood urged Fritz to increase his speed, so as to get to water as soon as possible.

"We'll not have far to go," replied Fritz; "you see that little inequality in the plain some distance in advance? There's our stopping-place. I know that place well; many a time I made it my camping-place for the night. It's a dreary spot; but, then, one is always sure of finding a supply of good water, which, in this part of the country, is all a man wants. We'll have to keep our eyes skinned, I'm thinking, or the Injins might make a dash on our cattle-yard. There's war-paint handy, and I shouldn't be astonished to find a parcel of it at the little lake where we intend nooning. Jist order up Pasqual and Dutch with the cavallada, so as to be all together, and I'll ride on ahead to make observations."

The result of the reconnoissance was entirely satisfactory, and the whole party was soon in sight of the small lake, that lay in a narrow basin, some twenty feet below the level of the prairie. In the little meadow immediately surrounding the water, there was plenty of good grass, and the tired mules were soon unladen and turned adrift, under the charge of Pasqual and Dutch. The Doctor, notwithstanding the almost insupportable heat, had a pile of buffalo-chips gathered in a few minutes, and with the aid of 'Ziah, was unpacking the cooking utensils to commence their pleasant occupation, preparing dinner. Leaving the others at their respective occupations, Norwood and Fritz ascended the bluff, and commenced a rigorous examination of the surrounding plain, for Indian signs; but not a moving thing could be seen. Descending to the edge of the lake on the opposite side from where their companions were, Fritz's keen eyes soon detected, from the trampled grass, that something had been about. Examining still further, they found several little signs, which, to Fritz, was sufficient proof that a party of Indians had stopped there to water no later than that very morning.

While Norwood returned along the margin of the lake, to let the Captain know the result of their observations, Fritz again ascended the bluff, or bank, to take another and better look over the surrounding country; but every thing was as he had left it—nothing was to be distinguished that bore any appearance whatever to either man or beast. Yet Fritz was any thing but satisfied. He was too well acquainted with Indian character not to feel anxious at the evident neighborhood of a large band, who,

if aware of the vicinity of any whites, would put forth all their ingenuity to surprise them. Fritz was an old hand at reading Indian signs, and those evidences on the margin of the little lake did not at all please him. They appeared to have been smoothed over; they were not natural; a party stopping to water would have left more traces on the grass, unless their intention was to deceive.

An old trapper like him was not to be deceived so easily. Returning again to the lake, he examined those marks more minutely. Apparently satisfied that his conclusion was correct, he went in among the animals, and taking his horse by the mane led him to the camp and bridled him; then taking his faithful rifle in his hand, leaped on his bare back, and cantering to where Norwood and the Captain were endeavoring to shield themselves from the burning sun by elevating the corners of a buffalo-robe on their rifles, exclaimed:

"Look out!--there's other business on hand; there's Injins not a mile from here! Set all hands to work to carry the packs, saddles, and every thing else to the level above; bullets may be flying in a short time, and our baggage will make a good breast-work. When that's done, hobble all the animals, and drive them up here, where they will be within reach of our rifles. I'm going out a-scouting. There's a place over here where I expect the Injins are lying hid. It is a hollow like this, where there was once a small lake, but it has been dried up for years. If there, they're waitin' till about the time they suppose we're takin' dinner, when they hope to surprise us. I will soon see if they're about. Don't delay a moment in getting ready!"

He touched his horse, and in a moment was upon the bank, and cantering over the plain. All was instant confusion in the camp--the Doctor was particularly out.

"Plague on the savages!" he groaned; "couldn't they wait until a man gets his dinner? There's the coffee already boiling, and the meat cooking; every thing will be spoiled--that's certain! If I hadn't a conscientious scruple, I would swear!--yes, I would! 'Ziah, you needn't look so horrified. Why, it would make a bishop swear, to lose his dinner! And then, carrying these heavy bales up such a hill! 'Ziah, there's only one saddle left; go, like a good fellow, and save me the trouble. I'm regularly done up, boiled and fried--and expect to be starved, into the bargain. Ugh! how hot it is!--the thermometer must be up considerable. Hey! you, Charley Norwood--tying up the animals, are you? I want to know, sir, how you can expect a man to fight that's got no dinner? No, sir; I have no stomach for it--all my vigor has oozed out. I'm as hollow as a glass receiver!"

While the Doctor was thus busy grieving his soul away, every thing had been prepared according to Fritz's direction; and the

whole party were now assembled on the rim of the basin, with their rifles ready for the combat. 'Ziah appeared as solemn as ever; the vicinity of danger seemed not to have in the least excited him; his countenance betrayed not the least curiosity or anxiety; his long, domestic-looking rifle had been carefully re-primed; and there he stood awaiting the result with the most stoical indifference.

Fritz was to be seen at the distance of half a mile, cantering at an easy gait; on him every eye was anxiously fixed. On a sudden, they saw him stop; then advance a few paces, and stop again; he had evidently seen something that bore a suspicious appearance. A moment after, he wheeled his horse, and dashed back toward his companions. At the same time, as if springing from the earth, appeared a large crowd of dusky figures on horse-back, who, with wild whoopings and brandishing of lances, followed in pursuit.

"Now, fellers!" exclaimed Fritz, as he threw himself off his horse in their midst, "we are going to have a game of ball! Keep cool, and shoot straight; make every ball hit its mark. It's not the first time I've fought the Comanches, and at greater odds than this!"

At this time, the Indians had arrived almost within rifle-shot, when, parting, they galloped round and round our little party, whooping and yelling with the greatest unction. There were upward of a hundred of them, all painted as if for battle, armed with long and well-burnished lances, which at every yell they rattled against their bull-hide shields, as if their voices couldn't make noise enough. Every one was naked to the hips, round which was wrapped the indispensable buffalo-robe; their oily skins glittered like snakes in the sunbeams. It was certainly a wild, if not a terrific exhibition; and Norwood even began to think that there was more danger in an Indian battle than he had ever dreamed of.

Apparently satisfied with this warlike display, the Indians withdrew to a short distance, where they appeared to be consulting as to their next performance. In a few minutes, one, who appeared to be the chief, advanced alone, and on foot, to some distance in front of his band, and made signs of friendship—signifying his desire of holding a talk. Fritz, telling his companions to "keep a sharp look-out," leaped over the slight breastwork of baggage, and with rifle in hand, advanced alone to where the Indian awaited him. He was a powerful fellow, and entirely naked, with the exception of his loins, which were covered by a scarlet shawl, wrapped several times around his body, and knotted over his right hip. His arms, from the wrist to the shoulder, were covered with broad brass bracelets, as evidence of his many distinguished battles; and from his ears were suspended enormous ear-rings, formed of shell, beautifully interlaced with gold. In his right hand was a long lance, the

handle of which was beautifully garnished with various colored feathers; this was his only weapon. His whole appearance was one entitled to command respect, and when Fritz advanced, he thought he had never seen so fine a specimen of the savage.

"Ugh!" began the chief, "what does the white-face want upon our hunting-ground? Does he come to chase the buffalo, or is he after the long scalp-locks of the Comanche? Speak!"

"The White Wolf is not unknown to me," replied Fritz; "I have seen his face before, away beyond the great river, where the Mexican moon was bright, and his warriors were rich with Mexican goods and horses. I know he is a great brave and will not lie. Why does he call this his hunting-ground, where the Pawnee, the Osage, and the Arapahoe hunt the buffalo? I dreamed your hunting-ground was toward the setting sun."

"The white-face dreams a lie. All this land is ours, from the big hills to the warm meadows, many moons distant, from the forked river to the setting sun; the Comanche goes where he pleases, and no one can cross his path and live!"

"The White Wolf talks big. Let him keep his land. We are journeying toward the big hills to catch the white bear of the mountains, and to see our brothers by the salt lake."

"'Tis good. But let the white-faces give us their arms; we will let them go, and our young men shall not harm them; the long guns shoot a great distance; we want them for our braves."

Fritz, who had kept a wary eye upon the body of Indians who were only fifty yards off, was now a little uneasy to see five or six warriors advancing to where he was standing. Pointing them out to the chief, he asked:

"Does the White Wolf want more braves to help him talk? Let him keep his young men away, or my long gun will speak 'oo.'"

"The white-face will not be harmed. The braves want to listen to our council. The White Wolf's word is good."

Norwood, who had been anxiously awaiting the result of the conference, was very much alarmed for the safety of his friend when he saw these other Indians riding forward. Following his first impulse, which was to assist Fritz at all hazards, he hastened to join him, giving his companions, as he was going, strict injunctions not to leave their inclosure, no matter what might happen. As soon as the rest of the Indians saw Norwood advance to join his comrade, they spurred their horses, and came galloping up, brandishing their lances as if to annihilate the two pale-faces.

"Place your back to mine," said Fritz to Norwood; "there's danger here; be firm; every thing is in keeping cool—under any circumstances. Don't fire till you are forced to!"

Then turning to the White Wolf, he again commenced in the Indian tongue:

"Does the White Wolf always go to council with so many braves? Or is he afraid that the pale-faces will fly like eagles, so that they may escape from the arms of the Comanches?"

"White Wolf is wise; he wants his young men to listen. There may be wisdom in the words of the pale-face."

"Let us pass; our path is not with you; our faces are toward the big snow hills; we are not snakes that lie hid in the grass, nor do we speak with forked tongues. Our hearts are warm for the red-men."

"The guns of the pale-faces must be ours. I have spoken."

Norwood, who did not understand a word that was said, saw that the Indians were terribly excited at the last words of the chief. They formed a complete circle around our adventurers, which they contracted by little and little, until they had come within a few feet, and from their excited looks were apparently but waiting for the signal from their chief to transfix them with their lances. Fritz, as well as Norwood, saw that the time was indeed critical—that their lives depended upon the mere will of one man; and that without a successful effort to work upon his feelings, they were gone. Cocking his rifle, and bringing the muzzle almost against the brawny chest of the chief, he exclaimed:

"And what if the pale-faces refuse to give up their guns?"

"They must die!"

"'Tis well. Will the eagle give up his wings? Will the panther suffer his claws to be cut? Is the pale-face a fool to give himself up to his enemy? Will the White Wolf say how many squaws are in his lodge?"

"Three—as beautiful as doves, as graceful as the antelope."

"'Tis well. How many children make the eyes of the White Wolf glad?"

"Six; from the knee, up, up, to my heart."

"Who pursues the buffalo, and hunts the wild bear, and strikes the young antelope, and returns with their meat to feed the squaws and the young eagles of the White Wolf?"

"Ugh! Who but White Wolf himself?"

"Who would provide meat for his lodge, if White Wolf was gone to the spirit-land?"

"The Great Spirit alone."

"Would the heart of his squaws be sad—would his young ones weep, if White Wolf should never again return to his tent?"

"Would the dove grieve for its mate? Would the young eagles miss their sire? What does the pale-face know of the Comanche's heart? Enough; I'll say no more."

"Now, listen: the White Wolf wants our blood—let him have it; look at my rifle; it looks toward your heart; it never lies; your warriors may pierce me with their lances, but you shall go to the spirit-land with me. Then, who will bring meat

to your lodge?—who will train up your children and make them great in battle? There will be sorrow and sadness in the place of mirth—a dark cloud in the place of sunshine. White Wolf will be dead. The pale-face has no squaw to love, no child to feed, no tent to rest in; when he dies there will be none to weep. Why should he want to live? There are none to love him. Let White Wolf speak, and they will die together. The pale-face has said it; he is ready!"

It would be useless to attempt to describe the effect these last words of Fritz produced in the mind of the chief. His chest seemed heaving with some powerful emotion; all the feelings of his better nature had been roused. Springing forward, he grasped Fritz by the hand, and while his features bore witness to his sincerity, exclaimed:

"The pale-face is my brother; his words are in my heart; let him go to the big hills; our arms will be tied!"

Then waving his hand, his warriors fell back, and our two heroes walked unscathed from their midst.

"Now then," said Fritz, as soon as he saw they were fairly out of reach of the Indians, "we must take them at their word, and leave this dangerous neighborhood. To-day they are our friends; to-morrow they may cut our throats. We must put as much land between us as we possibly can, before the night comes on. Do you go and prepare things at camp for an instant departure. I will attend to the animals."

In a few minutes our party had their mules packed, the saddles on their horses, and were leaving the neighborhood of such dangerous visitants. The Indians had all vanished, having withdrawn again to their burrow; and so effectually were they concealed, that one might ride within twenty yards of their camp, and never once dream of there being a living creature within a circumference of many miles. As mile after mile was hurried over, our party began to breathe more freely; and as less ills are always lost in the greater, so hunger and heat had entirely been forgotten during the threatened hostility of the Indians; but now, all immediate danger being removed, the exclamations of the Doctor at least were loud and frequent; and many were the epithets which he bestowed upon the "rascally savages," who had not only interrupted them at dinner, but had also forced them to travel under such a broiling sun. The Doctor felt angry, and he wanted badly to wreak a part of his displeasure on the Captain; but the latter personage took good care to keep out of his way—not so much through fear of the Doctor; but he did not like to make himself the subject of a sermon from 'Ziah, for which person the Doctor seemed to have a particular regard, keeping him continually at his side.

But every thing must have an end; and even the Doctor's complaints were brought to a close when he understood that the blue hills in the distance were beyond the Arkansas, on

which river they were to camp for the night, and where, according to Fritz's words, "buffaloes were to be counted by acres." And soon, indeed, they met a sight that was at the same time a subject of astonishment and delight.

There was the valley of the Arkansas, stretching from the bluff on which they were to a long line of sand-hills distant about two miles, forming the western boundary of the river, and which ran back into the desert until they were lost in the distance. Through this valley, but washing the base of the distant hills, flowed the turbid Arkansas, whose banks, as far as the eye could reach, were entirely denuded of trees; not even a bush or twig could be distinguished amid that ocean of long and yellow grass. It was a scene of boundless magnitude. Yet that which most took their eyes was not the sight of the so long-looked-for river, nor the extent of the view on every side; but there, beneath them, filling the whole valley, up the river and down, as far as the eye could see, were millions of buffaloes, feeding on the wild luxuriance of nature. The whole valley appeared to be but one mass of moving creatures, wandering at will among the extensive pastures of that lonely river. The sight produced its effects, according to the various dispositions of our travelers. On Norwood it produced a feeling of wonder, and kindled in his breast an enthusiasm for the glorious profusion of God's creating hand, that had pastured that lonely region, and filled it with those countless herds that eye could not grasp nor tongue could number. The Captain, notwithstanding his resolution not to be astonished or pleased at any thing he might see in Yankee-land, forgot his selfishness in his delight; and for once owned, that "this collection of animals rather exceeded any thing of the kind in his country." The Doctor's imagination ran altogether upon roast meat, fat ribs, marrow-bones, and such things, until his very stomach ached with anticipated delights. 'Ziah was the only one who appeared entirely unmoved; his solemn countenance underwent no change, and he sat on his mule, entirely unconcerned, notwithstanding the hurried exclamations of his friend the Doctor, who endeavored in vain to communicate some of his own feelings to his companion.

The sun was sinking behind the distant sand-hills, as our party descended into the valley which was to be their camping-place for some days. The buffaloes, apparently too lazy, or dreading no danger, merely moved out of their path, and stood at a little distance, gazing with no little astonishment upon our intruders. Fritz led the way to a beautiful little meadow near the river, where was plenty of good grass. There the mules were unpacked, and as the Doctor and 'Ziah were busy setting fire to a large pile of buffalo-chips, Fritz, the Captain and Norwood went out among the buffaloes, and soon returned laden with the choicest meat from the fattest cows. That was a night

of feasting; every one was in good-humor. The Captain and the Doctor appeared to have drowned all difficulties in a bottle of "old Monongahela;" the latter was in a glorious humor, and seemed to have forgotten the toil and privation of the day's journey.

"Well, Charley, this *is* a glorious life!" exclaimed the Doctor, as he folded himself in his buffalo robe preparatory to taking a good night's rest. "Plenty to eat and drink, and the best at that! Who would not fancy such a life? To tell you the truth, Charley, I believe if I had such diet for six weeks, I would recover my lost flesh. Traveling in the sun is very debilitating; it affects the gastric functions very much; and I would advise you, my friend, for the good of your own health, to travel less and eat more!"

With this advice the Doctor turned over, gave a grunt or two, and was soon asleep; and in imagination was engaged the whole night in demolishing a huge mountain of fat buffalo-meat, that never seemed to diminish, notwithstanding the huge slices he stowed away in his stomach.

CHAPTER III.

THE STOLEN CHILD.

OUR party remained encamped for several days in this plentiful spot. There was nothing but hunting and feasting. The Captain's journal was woefully neglected; all his time was taken up in making excursions with Fritz, and taking lessons in buffalo-hunting under his direction; he had even condescended to learn from a Yankee—though Fritz considered it no compliment to be his master. Even the Doctor was at last satiated with such "riotous living," as 'Ziah termed it. The latter personage seemed to have improved but very little with his keeping; his countenance wore the same lugubrious expression, and his form was as tall, as stiff, and as thin as ever. Though the Doctor had taken him under his special charge, yet, notwithstanding all his prescriptions of boiled tongue, stewed liver, roasted hump, and scores of yards of raw "boudins," he remained as slab-sided as ever; until even the Doctor was at last forced to declare his case to be entirely incurable—a regular *lusus nature*—a man that could eat, and never get the better of his leanness!

The heat, in the mean time, had subsided considerably, so that it was not even oppressive to the fat carcass of the Doctor, who declared they might now travel as much as they pleased: he would be able to undergo any fatigue, as the rest of the last few days had entirely restored his strength. Accordingly, it was resolved to move up the river several days' journey, and form

another camp within a few miles of the Caches, where they would be near the Santa Fe trail, and would likewise have an abundance of wood and game, if the Indians had not been there before them.

The second day after they had removed their camp to this place was an eventful one in its consequences to more than one of our party. Their camping-place was in the bottom of a river immediately opposite a couple of islands, standing half-way in the stream, which were thickly covered with a heavy growth of cottonwood and willow. In the rear of the camp, and half a mile distant, was a low range of hills, running parallel with the river, and losing themselves in the distance. The sun was setting in a heavy bank of clouds, whose grim-looking forms betokened an approaching storm. Every thing was still and desolate around. The Doctor, and his help, 'Ziah, had just set fire to a large pile of dry wood, and buffalo-chips, preparatory to preparing supper. The Captain was writing a few remarks in his journal, in which the boorishness of the Yankees was the principal subject; because the Doctor had called him an "ignorant biped," and 'Ziah had followed up the retort, by adding something about "a foreign English bull, whose head was near as hard as a buffaler's." Norwood and Fritz were reclining on a couple of buffalo-ropes, spread out upon the grass, and laying plans for to-morrow's sport. Dutch and Pasqual were down at the river, watering the animals; every thing was as peaceable and quiet as a holy Sabbath eve.

"Hark!" cried Fritz, springing to his feet; "did you not hear a shout? There it is again!" he cried, as loudly and distinctly a shout was heard in the distance. Turning whence the voice had proceeded, a solitary figure was distinguished, standing on one of the nearest hills, in the rear of the camp.

"I know that form!" cried Fritz; "it's old Sib Cone, of the mountains. But what can he be doing away down here, I wonder? There's something wrong at camp!"

So saying, Fritz gave an answering shout, which, when the other had heard, he descended quickly from his place of observation, and hastened toward Fritz, who started forward to meet him. They remained a few minutes in deep conversation, and from what the other had said, Fritz appeared to be very much excited. They then quickly approached the camp, and Norwood immediately perceived from the flashing eye and stern expression of Fritz, that something unusual had taken place.

"I must leave you, Mr. Norwood!" said Fritz; "I have other things to do besides hunting buffaloes. This old man's child has been carried off by the Injins, and I must assist in her rescue. I will be away for a day or two, anyhow—and may be forever. She must be saved—even if I lose my hair—it must be done. Sib, tell Mr. Norwood about it, while I'm gitting ready."

Old Sib, as Fritz named him, then came forward, and Norwood had an opportunity of seeing, for the first time, a fine specimen of the world-renowned mountain-men. His dress was entirely of buckskin, but old and faded by long and constant use. On his head was a cap made of the skin of a grizzly-bear, which was fastened underneath his chin by strings of deer sinew; passing over his left shoulder was a broad band of buckskin, to which were attached his huge powder-horn and bullet-pouch of panther-skin, and round his middle was a belt of the same material in which was fastened a large hunting-knife, with buck-handle. The band that crossed his breast, and passed over the left shoulder, appeared to be the bearer of all his wealth. To it were attached, besides powder-horn and bullet-pouch, all the little knick-knacks of a hunter's wants—among which were bullet-molds, a horn-charger, a couple of thick wire-needles, flint and steel, a drinking-cup made of bull's horns, and a variety of other things; making up the sum and substance of a hunter's wealth. His rifle was long, heavy, and apparently very old; the stock had seen service, at least, for it was cracked and split in a hundred different places, but had been patched up by thongs and strips of raw-hide. His gray hairs were few and thin; his complexion was tanned by long exposure, and the expression of his thin, dry face, was that of one who had suffered much during a long and eventful life. His form and make was that which betokened great strength, and wonderful powers of endurance, which age seemed only to have hardened, and not diminished.

As he came forward and seated himself cross-legged on the bare earth, Norwood distinguished a tear stealing its way down his furrowed cheek. The heart of the father was with his child, whom he might never see again. Burying his face in his sunburnt hands, he remained a few moments as if communing with his grief. Norwood's sympathies were all aroused, and he mentally vowed that the old and bereaved parent should have all his assistance to recover his lost child.

"Stranger!" said the old hunter, raising his face from between his hands, "I'm an old man, but my heart is as warm as ever. Many things have I suffered in my day, but this is the hardest blow. You didn't know my child—my Mountain Rose—or you would know how much I've lost! The Injins took her when I was in the mountains, trappin' for beaver—when I came back my cabin was desolate—there was no Rose to meet me. They had been gone two days, but I followed on their trail; day after day, I traveled from sunrise to sunset—and at night I laid awake thinking of my child. Oh, sir! it was lonely traveling; the only thing that cheered me was when I would arrive at the Injins' campin'-places, and sometimes see the print of Rose's foot in the sand—that would spur me on, and I would forget every thing but her I was after. To-day, I saw

where you had killed a buffalo; and as the Injins must be near by, I thought I would hunt up your camp and maybe git one or two to help me. Fritz is an old friend of mine—he knows my Rose—it'll not be the first time we've hunted Injins together!"

"How far do you think the Indians are from here?" inquired Norwood, when old Sib had finished.

"Not far," replied the old man, "not far—maybe a day's journey toward the Cimaron."

"I will assist you to recover your stolen child!" said Norwood, as he rose to make preparations for his instant departure.

"God bless you!" exclaimed old Sib, as he sprung forward and squeezed his hand. "Now I feel sure of again seeing my Rose!"

In a few minutes all their preparations were made for departure. Old Sib, notwithstanding all of Norwood's endeavors, would not be prevailed upon to mount one of the horses; he said he could travel better on foot, and would be enabled to trace the Indians through the grass. The Captain was to remain in charge of the camp until their return; so, all things being prepared, our trio turned their backs on the Arkansas, and guided by old Sib, struck out over the hills in the direction of the Cimaron.

The sun had set by the time they got clear of the sand-hills, and entered on the solitary, unbroken plain beyond. The clouds, which a short time before had looked so threatening, had changed their course, and driven back upon themselves, were now almost lost beneath the plain; a few points being only visible, which, in color and shape, resembled the tops of some far-distant mountains. Old Sib led off at a swinging trot, which, considering the many days' previous travel, was something wonderful; but "his heart was with his child;" and in the anticipation of again seeing her, all thought of toil and suffering was quenched.

During the whole of that night they traveled on, without resting even for a moment; and when day at last dawned, old Sib—who appeared the least fatigued—proposed a few hours' rest for the wearied horses. Norwood was much tired by his long ride, and he hailed the proposition of a few hours' rest with manifest delight. The two horses were immediately unsaddled and hobbled; and while Fritz remained on the first watch, old Sib and Norwood were soon in a sound sleep. When the latter awoke, the sun was high in the heavens; he had slept long and soundly. Old Sib and Fritz were sitting on the grass at a little distance, apparently engaged in earnest conversation. As soon as they perceived Norwood to be awake, they came forward; and Fritz, going to his leathern wallet, which was fastened to his saddle, opened it, and produced a couple of handiuls of dried buffalo-meat, and a dozen of biscuit, all of which he spread upon the grass, to serve for their frugal breakfast.

"Well, Sib," said Norwood, "what's to be done to-day?—have we far to go until we get upon their trail?"

"They're not far away," replied the other, "only five or six hours' journey will bring us upon them, or my name's not Sib. We've taken a near cut on them; from the direction of their trail yesterday, they were steering for El Coyote, a small lake not many leagues from here. I expect they're resting themselves there; we will leave this in the evening, and come upon them before daylight, so you have the whole day to rest in. It is a dangerous business; the Arapahoes always fight well; and there's so many of them we must pounce on them in the night. Fritz and I have fought them often."

"Come! come!" said Norwood, "you talk as if you doubted my bravery. I have never yet been in an Indian or any other fight; but if I judge myself rightly, I will be able to take my share in the coming battle!"

"Yes! I can swear to your bravery!" chimed in Fritz. "I never saw one so cool as you were that day when we two were surrounded by the Comanches. You acted just like an old hunter! Old Sib don't doubt you; he only wants to let you know that it's not a-going to be child's-play—this fightin' the Arapahoes. Do you see this ugly mark on my face?—that was made by the knife of an Arapahoe—it's the only blood an Injin has ever draw'd from me! Sib, do you remember that time when black Ben was with us, away up on Smoky-Hill Fork?"

"Yes! yes!" replied the other, "well do I mind that fight—three of us ag'in' two hundred—and whipped them at that! Yes, that *was* a fight! Poor Ben lost his scalp among the Blackfeet since that time! He was a fine feller—great at a bear-fight—but he's done for now—maybe it's my turn to go next; but not, I hope, till I've got my child back again—then I don't care how soon old Sib goes under!"

"Come, cheer up!" said Fritz. "You and I have seen many black days!—and many white ones too. I feel certain we'll get Rose back; and then we'll all go with you to the mountains and celebrate your return with a grand bear-hunt!"

In such conversation they whiled away the hours till near sunset, when Sib allowed it was time to start. The two horses were again saddled; and after examining their rifles the three took their way across the deserted plain toward the little lake of El Coyote, where they hoped to meet the Indians.

It was probably two hours after dark when our party again stopped. The moon was high in the heavens, and poured a flood of light upon the surrounding plain; enhancing, if any thing, the dreariness of the scene. The sky shone bright above, but in the west a few heavy clouds came creeping up, as if betokening an approaching storm. Every thing was as quiet as solitude itself; the sense of loneliness was too profound—it ~~was a~~ pain—a misery!

Norwood, though possessing a full flow of spirits, and filled with the sanguine anticipations of youth, felt an inexpressible chill sweeping over him for which he could not account. It was not so much the sense of a doubtful and dangerous conflict with the Indians; but the awful stillness that overshadowed every thing, joined to the desolate appearance of the surrounding plain, which the light of the moon only served to make more lonely. Even his two companions seemed, in a measure, to have partaken of his feelings; for, after taking the saddles from the horses, and letting them feed upon the short and dried-up grass, they threw themselves at full length upon the ground, and without a word spoken, seemed only intent upon their own thoughts. They did not sleep; for as Norwood reclined upon his saddle, he could see from their restless limbs that their minds were fixed intently upon their dangerous undertaking.

The hours dragged slowly on. Norwood knew they must be near the lake where the Indians were expected to be found—and his companions were probably waiting till the moon would get low, ere they would again proceed. But before the night had half passed away, the sky was filled with black and angry-looking clouds, that moved like winged shadows, and, in their lonely flight, hiding both stars and moon from the earth.

"Now's the time," said Sib, springing from the ground; "it'll soon be dark enough for all we want; saddle your horses, and I'll take you a league further to a little hollow only a half-mile from the spring, where you can leave them; we'll do all our fighting on foot."

"There's going to be a storm," said Fritz, as he pointed to the west, where a broad and inky mass, as solid in appearance as a wall, was appearing above the plain.

"So much the better," replied Sib; "they'll not expect visitors at such a time; and we'll be among them without their knowing any thing about it, until we choose to make ourselves heard. Follow me," he continued, when he saw his companions mounted; "don't lose yourselves in the dark, and be as quiet as possible."

After half-an-hour's travel they again stopped; but this time in a narrow depression, or hollow, which might have been formed in times long gone, by the waters of some stream—for in appearance it was like a channel hollowed out of the plain by the action of some current; but now, like the whole surrounding country, covered with the short, yet nutritious buffalo-grass. Norwood and Fritz dismounted silently, and leaving their horses saddled and bridled, attached them to each other so that they could scarcely move, by fastening the head of one horse to the crupper of the other; and then, for further security, hobbled their fore-legs, so that in case of any alarm, they could not move to any distance. Their rifles were again examined, and fresh caps put on—knives were loosened in

their sheaths, and Norwood, who always carried a pair of revolvers in his belt, made Fritz accept of one for his better security in the approaching conflict.

"Boys," said Sib, when they had climbed the bank of the gully, "if we should be separated, remember this is the rendezvous, which you can easily find, by noticing that little hill before us; it's the only one within a distance of several miles; our course is right along the foot of it; so if you can only see that hill in the dark, you will know where your horses are. Now, then, be cautious; I will keep ahead, and when you see me squat, do the same. Remember it's for an old man's child you're going to fight!"

By this time it was so dark that Sib's stalwart frame could scarcely be distinguished at a few paces distant. The storm that had been gathering for so long a time was about to burst: for far away could be heard the wind howling and coursing across the desert. The dark inky mass had covered the heavens to the zenith, and still progressed slowly and solemnly, like death itself; a few flashes of lightning, occasionally seen struggling with the mass, served but to add to the increasing gloom. Norwood, notwithstanding his constitutional bravery, felt a strange misgiving at heart, withstanding all his efforts to shake it off. The darkness of the night—the coming storm—the loneliness of their situation, so far removed from human habitation, and the adventure before them, so uncertain in its results—all tended to impress his naturally buoyant disposition with a depression at once unaccountable and painful. And yet he would not have foregone this adventure, no matter how dangerous, for any consideration. He did not fear the conflict—he wanted to be in it; but he did not like this harrowing suspense, which was worse than any thing that could befall him in the approaching contest.

Onward they went with cautious and silent steps, old Sib leading the way, whose form could scarcely be distinguished in the thickening gloom. Norwood kept close to Fritz, for in the impenetrable darkness it was easy to be lost; and more than once he lost sight of Sib, and was only conscious of his neighborhood by a low, cricket-like sound, which was the pass-word in the dark. After half-an-hour's toilsome progress, during which time they did not proceed far, on a whisper from Sib, they all stopped, and crouching to the ground, listened for a few minutes if any noise could be distinguished above the roar of the coming tempest. But nothing was to be heard save the howling of the wind and the dull, heavy boom of the yet distant thunder. No rain had yet fallen, but from the hubbub in the distance, Norwood knew it could not be far away; and already a few heavy drops came dancing down—the *avant couriers* of the storm.

"Do you hear that?" whispered Fritz, as a noise was heard

close to their right, which to Norwood seemed like the trampling of horses, and could be but a little way off; a sudden dash of the wind, for the moment, carried all other sounds away.

"Back, back!" said Sib, hurriedly, at the same time grasping Norwood by the shoulder, and forcing him along; "quick, for your lives!—the red devils are driving in their horses, and they'll be on us in a moment! Owgh!" he continued, after they had all retreated some twenty yards from their first position—"I thought we'd find them here; now I know where their camp is—it's not fifty yards from here, on the other side of the little lake—I could go into it with my eyes shut. The guard's drivin' in their horses, to keep them from bein' frightened away by the storm. It's well enough we heard them when we did, for we were right in their path. Squat yourselves, boys; the lightnin' might betray us. The storm'll delay us some, for it 'ill wake the Injins; and we must lay still awhile 'til they're asleep ag'in."

The storm now burst upon them with all its fury, and the quick, vivid flashes of lightning, running, as if upon the very ground, served to illumine the plain, and discovered to their eyes a large troop of horses but a few yards distant, which ten or twelve Indians were driving before them. The number and position of their tents were also easily distinguished; for their white forms served to concentrate the blue electric light that seemed to play in their very midst. The rain came down in one continued stream, and in an instant wet our adventurers through and through. Norwood had never, in all his life, witnessed such a storm; and he gazed with something of awe upon the vast plain, illumined almost continually by the incessant lightnings; and then the wind, raging and howling as if ten thousand spirits were at play, and the loud crash of the echoing thunder—all served to make it one of the most fearful, and, at the same time, grandest displays, he had ever witnessed.

After crouching for half an hour upon the half-deluged plain, and the first violence of the storm in some measure abating, old Sib whispered for them to follow, and led off toward the lodges, sometimes walking erect, and again crawling upon his hands and knees. The lightning was now less frequent and vivid, but the violence of the wind and rain seemed to have increased, which would completely drown any noise they might accidentally make in their advance.

"Now, boys," whispered Sib, as he paused apparently on the outskirts of their encampment, "we must, by some means, find out in which of these tents my darling Rose is; when that's done, the battle is half over. Ugh! if she only know'd old Sib was about, we would have no difficulty in finding her out; but as it is, boys, we must do the best we can. But let me tell you

one thing—use the knife; it don't bark; you must only shoot when the Injins have discovered you, and then make as much noise as you can. I'm glad the lightnin' is goin' away; there'll be no danger of them seein' us, and I defy human ears to hear much in this wind and rain. We're right on the edge of the spring—on the other side's the lodges; we must keep a little to the left; lay low, and make as little noise as you can."

Again they moved on their hands and knees, one after another, in regular Indian-file—Norwood bringing up the rear. In a few minutes, Sib again halted, and motioning the other two to his side, pointed to the dim outline of a tent only a few paces distant. But scarcely had they come together, when a low growl was heard in the lodge, followed in an instant by the violent barking of a dog.

"We're discovered!" whispered Fritz.

"Hush!—lay still!" said Sib; at the same time putting his two hands to his mouth, he let forth a succession of quick, sharp yells, and finished by a long, dismal howl, as if coming from a wolf. The imitation was complete; Norwood started at the fidelity with which it was given, almost thinking the animal right beside him. Sib's self-possession saved them from discovery. The deep, gruff voice of an Indian was heard within the tent, bidding the dog be quiet. Every thing being again still, our adventurers moved cautiously away from this dangerous locality, and continuing their course, in a short time found themselves right in the midst of the encampment; for the faint and distant lightning gave them sufficient light to distinguish the white skins of the lodges on every side.

"Boys!" whispered Sib, as they all paused, crouching with their bellies on the wet grass, "nothing can be done till we know in which tent they keep Rose; there's no Injins moving to-night, 'cept them with the hosses, and they're far enough off, so we've nothing to fear, unless we come across some of their cussed dogs. The only plan 'll be for us to creep from lodge to lodge, and try to find where my child is: which I think 'll not be difficult, as she always sleeps with her ears open, and the least noise 'll waken her. Fritz, do you go up along the tents on that side; I'll meet you at the upper end of the encampment. Stop at every one, and make a noise like a cricket; repeat it all round each tent, and if you hear it answered, go off a little distance and whoop like an owl—that 'll be the signal, and I'll join you. If you hear the same noise, come to me. As for you, Mr. Norwood, you can't assist us any now. Do you see that tent only a few yards up there? That's the chief's; it's always in the center of the camp. Go and shelter yourself behind it the best way you can, and on no account leave it till one of us comes for you. Good-by!"

The two immediately crawled off, according to arrangement leaving Norwood entirely alone. He paused awhile to listen,

but could hear nothing of his companions; the wind and rain drowning completely any noise they might accidentally have made. He fancied, once or twice, he distinguished old Sib creeping on his hands and knees, when the distant lightning for a moment faintly lit up the scene. Feeling numb and chill by the drenching rain, Norwood determined to shelter himself according to Sib's advice, in the best manner he could. Creeping silently to the designated lodge, which he could scarcely distinguish, until almost touching it, he endeavored to keep off the violence of the wind by placing himself as closely as possible beneath its shelter.

He was in some measure protected from the wind, but the rain came eddying around the sides of the tent, and seemed to pour upon him with redoubled fury. The lodge appeared to be very large, and more than once did he wish himself under its protecting skins. He listened for a long time, in the vain hope of hearing from his companions; but he could distinguish no sound, save the groaning of the tempest, which still labored on with undiminished fury. His situation was miserable in the extreme, and he caught himself more than once longing for the kindly shelter of his own home, now many hundred miles distant.

He at length became aware of something moving within the tent, for he sat with his back close against it, and listening attentively, heard the rustle of skins right behind him, as if some one was turning on his bed. Placing his ear to the side of the lodge, he heard the person get up; and after a few moments, a sound as of scraping together of coals, and the blowing of a person, as if engaged kindling a fire. Drawing his knife from its sheath, he quietly and cautiously inserted its sharp point into the side of the tent, and drawing it gently along, made a small orifice, to which he immediately applied his eye. At first he could scarcely distinguish any thing; but in a little while he noticed a dark object bending over a few half-dead coals, and with great pertinacity blowing them into life. The fire appeared to be very stubborn, for notwithstanding all the endeavors of the person, it would not strike a blaze; a few sparks would only fly out at every blow, and exploding all around the blower's head, leave every thing almost as dark as it was before. Even an Indian's patience, however proverbial, could not stand that; letting fly a whole torrent of words, that to Norwood were entirely unintelligible—only, from the manner in which they were uttered, he judged them to be any thing but complimentary to the stubbornness of the fire—the blower got up, and going to a dark heap in the corner, returned with a quantity of grease, which being thrown upon the coals, soon burst into a clear, bright flame. As the Indian stooped to feed the fire with a few small sticks and some dry buffalo-chips, he saw she was an old and weasoned-looking squaw; and in her present occupation

looking like a witch busily at work over some midnight incantation.

The apartment into which Norwood was looking was only a few feet square, and appeared to be separated from the body of the lodge by low hangings of dressed deerskin. But that which most took his eye, was a bed of buffalo-robcs in the far corner of the recess, on which some person appeared to be sleeping. The shadow of the old squaw being thrown upon the sleeper, he could not, for some time, get a fair view of what had at first so taken his attention. He felt certain, however, that the person sleeping was she whom they were after; he had nothing as yet upon which he could justify his conclusion, but his heart seemed to whisper that it must be Rose.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESCUE.

THE old squaw, having at length succeeded in starting her fire, squatted herself before it, and rocking herself backward and forward, commenced a low, humming tune, which sounded in Norwood's ears like the words, "he-yi, he, he, he!—he-yi, he, he, he!" which were chanted alternately in a low and high tone, with a sing-song sameness. The side of the old hag was toward Norwood, and he could not expect to do much without being observed. Looking closer, he saw that by moving his position on the outside, so as to bring himself in a line with the back of the squaw, he would be much nearer the sleeper's couch, where he might ascertain if his presentiment was not correct, without much danger of observation. Moving quietly a few paces to the left, he knelt down, and with cautious efforts succeeded in a few moments in slitting the side of the tent, so that he could crawl through with perfect ease. Being afraid that the entrance of the wind and rain would alarm the old crone, he divested himself of his well-soaked hunting-shirt, and with a couple of pins, succeeded in fastening it over the orifice, making a complete flap or screen, so as to keep out the cold, damp air.

Stealing his head through as gently as possible, he saw the squaw still at the fire, and humming away at her song; her back was toward him, and he could maneuver with comparative safety, for that corner of the tent was darkened by the shadow of the old woman's body. Leaving his rifle without, he worked his body by little and little, until his whole person was within the tent. He now became aware that he was observed, for he noticed a full, dark eye gazing upon him from under a buffalo-robe, and watching his every movement. It belonged to the occupant of the couch, which was now almost within reach of

his arm. The calm, lustrous eye fixed upon him satisfied him at once. It was Rose, and there she lay, gazing into his face, without any alarm or astonishment, as if his advent had been long expected. Norwood felt in a moment that every thing was understood. Worming himself along, till he came alongside the couch, he paused a while, considering what to do. The buffalo-robe that partly covered the head of the captive was gently removed, and Norwood saw two large, starlike eyes gazing intently upon his own; at the same time a childlike hand was thrust forth and pointed to a lariat that lay on a mat close at the foot of her couch. The look that accompanied this action expressed every thing that Norwood desired to know. Possessing himself of the rope, he crawled up gently behind the old hag, and with a quick and dextrous maneuver, threw her upon her face, at the same time thrusting the corner of her old and greasy blanket far into her mouth. In an instant she was bound, hand and foot, and lay helpless and bewildered upon the ground. When this was accomplished, Norwood listened a moment if any of the inhabitants of the lodge were stirring; but every thing was still. Going back to the couch, he found its occupant sitting erect; wrapping a robe round her slight form, to serve as a protection from the rain, he drew her with him—and the two soon stood safe without the tent.

The wind had in a measure subsided, but the rain, as if to make amends, appeared with greater violence. Sheltering his charge with the buffalo-robe, Norwood, in a few words, whispered, "that her father and Fritz were somewhere about, and that it would be necessary to remain where they were, till their position could be ascertained, so as to join them without danger of going astray."

His hunting-shirt was again donned; and taking up his rifle, he waited anxiously for some noise from his companions; but notwithstanding all his attention, he could hear nothing but the ceaseless patter of the heavy rain. Now that his errand was accomplished, he felt anxious to leave his dangerous position, for there was danger every moment of being discovered; but even if he knew the direction to their rendezvous, it would not be proper to leave without communicating with his two fellow-adventurers. He whispered his feelings to Rose, who, like a child, was confidingly nestling in his bosom.

"Stop," said she, "I will call them."

At the same time, a soft, clear, bird-like sound came from her throat, distinct, yet far away, as if it might be in the air, or on the earth; so short and quick that the ear could scarcely tell whether it was really a sound or not, and yet so loud that it could be heard far above the tempest; to Norwood it seemed like the voice of some invisible being, so pure, so heavenly; or like the sound often felt in dreams, which comes and goes like a soft vein of light, scarce seen till it is lost.

The sound had scarcely died away, when a terrible outcry was heard in the tent behind them. The old squaw, by some unaccountable means, had succeeded in freeing her mouth from the blanket, and now set up the most dismal howlings. There was no time to delay now—for the Indians in the back part of the lodge were heard running toward the little recess whence the outcry proceeded. Seizing Rose by the hand, Norwood started at a run in the supposed direction of their horses. The whole encampment was by this time alarmed, and the Indians were heard shouting to each other on every side. It was so dark that Norwood felt certain he could not be seen, unless some of them would run against him, which seemed likely to happen, for the heavy pattering of naked feet was heard around him; and he had to pause once or twice, as he saw several dark objects flitting across his path. Trusting to Providence, he dashed ahead, to get clear of the encampment as soon as possible; Rose ran by his side, seemingly as light and fleet as an antelope, retaining all the time a firm clasp of his left hand, and with her quick eye and ear succeeded in avoiding many a danger.

From the direction of the yells of his pursuers, and the distance he had run, he judged he was now clear of the lodges; pausing a moment to consider which way he had best take, he became aware that there was a band of Indians right in front of him, only a few feet in advance, and directly in his path, who had apparently been waiting for his approach. Turning to the left he hoped to avoid them, but they had observed him, and setting up a yell, darted after him. They had scarcely taken a dozen steps, when he and his charge were suddenly precipitated into a body of water, which, though not very deep, appeared to be of considerable extent. The Indians, who had heard the splash, stopped upon the bank, and stood whooping and yelling, like so many devils. Norwood knew he was caught unless he could manage to wade the lake, before the rest of his pursuers could come up and surround him. Taking Rose in his arms, he moved off with as little noise as possible, for though he was within a few yards of the Indians it was so dark that he could not be distinguished.

But scarcely had he taken a few steps, when he became aware that something unusual was taking place in the distance, and apparently on the other side of the encampment. His pursuers had also heard the noise, for they stood silent, as if alarmed, and listening for its repetition. The big drops of rain kept such a pattering in the water that he could not, for a long time, tell what the nature of the noise was; all this time, however, he kept silently wading through the lake, and succeeded in reaching the other side in safety. There were no Indians to oppose his egress; climbing the bank, he placed Rose on her feet, then turned to listen what it might be that caused the uproar in the distance.

"It's a stampede!" whispered Rose; "don't you hear the hoofs feet thundering on the ground?"

And so indeed it was. Norwood could compare it to nothing but the avalanche thundering along, and increasing at every bound. The whole earth appeared to shake under the tread of the frightened mass; and loud and clear above the terrific din were the two voices of Fritz and Sib, lashing the animals to still greater speed. Onward came the maddened troop—through and through the encampment swept they on—tearing over lodge and tent, and trampling to the earth whatever was in their course. Like a whirlwind passed they by, leaving in their wake the mangled forms of many of their masters, buried amid the ruins of their lodges.

Norwood listened until the sound of that living torrent had entirely died away in the distance. He had never before heard any thing that created such a feeling of the fearful, and it required more than one effort of his young companion to recall his mind to the yet existing danger of his position, and the necessity of still further exertion. Supporting Rose with his arm, he now endeavored, as well as he could through the deep darkness, to direct his way to where their horses had been left. But after walking round and round for half an hour, he found that he was completely bewildered; he could see nothing of the little hill which was his only landmark; nor could he hear any response from his two companions, though he shouted several times to the full extent of his voice. Nothing was to be heard but the still ceaseless driving of the rain. As a last resort, he attempted to fire his rifle, but the charge was wet and would not explode; he drew his pistol for the same purpose, but Rose stopped him.

"No, no!" said she, "that would be dangerous; your firing would certainly be heard by my father, but then it would also serve as well to guide the Indians, and we would certainly be taken. As it is, we must make as much haste as possible, so as to be far enough out of sight of the Arapahoes by the time day breaks, or we will certainly be lost. My father knows very well that we have escaped; and if he can not find us to-night he will certainly hunt us out to-morrow; but if the worst should happen, we can certainly find our way on foot to your camp on the Arkansas. Come, let us go; I think daylight is not far distant, and we must put two or three leagues behind us before it comes!"

Norwood felt that this advice was the best; and taking a direction which seemed to lead away from the Indian encampment, the two started on their dreary pilgrimage across the now almost flooded plain.

We must now return for a brief period to the camp on the Arkansas, and narrate a few of the incidents that befell the Captain and his men after the departure of Norwood and the oth-

ers. The Captain felt proud of his delegated authority, and he took the present favorable opportunity to vent his spleen upon the Doctor in more ways than one. He would have also liked very much to treat 'Ziah in the same way; but there was something in the Yankee's eye that told him there would be danger in meddling with him. They managed, however, to get along very well till the night came on; when it became necessary to detail a guard to keep watch upon the animals. Now the Doctor had always been remarkably good in taking his share of the night-watch, and he would certainly not have objected at the present time, had not the Captain, in dividing the night into two watches, of five hours each, forgot to include himself as one of the sentries.

"No, sir!" exclaimed the latter, in reply to the Doctor's expostulation, "I was left in charge of the camp, and I shall be obeyed; and who ever heard of the commander taking upon himself the duties of the plebeian soldier?"

"Why, sir!" replied the Doctor, "Charley Norwood did not think so; he performed more camp-duties than any of us, though he was our captain."

"I don't care what Mr. Norwood did!" exclaimed the indignant Captain; "though he saw fit to do these things, I don't see it fit for me to do them. And let me tell you another thing, sir: I never soiled my hands with any kind of work until I came into your confounded country; and as soon as I can get clear of it, I will!"

"There, now!" replied the somewhat heated Doctor, "there's a cockney for you—one of the real bull-breed! I wish to gracious you were out of the country, sir; you're like the toad, sir—you leave your slime wherever you go. *You* talk of never having soiled your hands!—why, you little wart you, a white man would be contaminated by your very touch!"

The Captain felt himself terribly excited; his little person seemed to dilate with the indignant swell of his feelings. To the last taunt of the Doctor's he could not or would not reply; probably this was, however, owing to the sight of 'Ziah's long and solemn-looking nose appearing suddenly over the Doctor's shoulder, when he thought that personage to be out of hearing, and which now, in the gray twilight, seemed like a threatening specter to the doughty Captain. At this sudden appearance the latter personage turned away, and left the Doctor master of the field.

However, by the intervention of 'Ziah—who this time proved a real peace-maker—things were so far arranged that the Captain consented to take his share of the night-watch—which was all the Doctor wanted—and the two finished their contest as usual, by drinking each other's health in a glass of good old Monongahela—an article with which the Doctor had taken good care to furnish himself before leaving the States.

The night passed away without any occurrence whatever to disturb them; and when the morning sun rose beautiful and bright, the five sat down to their early breakfast; and never did hot coffee or broiled buffalo-meat taste with a sweeter relish. After finishing his meal, the Captain took out his book and noted down a few of his observations, while the Doctor took a stroll along the river to botanize, and perhaps, also, to quicken his stomach by a little exercise, so as to do better justice to his dinner.

It was a lovely morning; the air was fresh and invigorating, and a gentle wind rustling the leaves on the island trees, gave a lively sound to the usual stillness of the air. The river flowed along, with its yellow waters curling and eddying in many a pool. Every thing breathed with the spirit of peace; and the Doctor's feelings, as a matter of course, were in unison. Silently he wandered down the bank of the lonely river, his eye at one moment watching the rustling waters as they sped singing by the projecting sod—at another, gladdened with the sight of strange and gaudy flowers, waving their heads amid the tufted grass; and then pausing to hear the shrill bark of the prairie-dog, as he watched the intruder from his cone-like house. No wonder he forgot himself in the calm enjoyment of his walk; and when he at last stopped, with his hands full of curious plants, and looked around, he saw that he had wandered out of sight of camp; but this caused him no uneasiness; for as he looked up and down the river, and on every side, he could see nothing but a few old bulls feeding in the distance. As he turned to retrace his steps as slowly as he came, he was startled by the quick, shrill rattle of a snake right beside him. Looking down, he saw a large rattlesnake coiled up, and with fiery eyes, and head advanced, daring him to the encounter. The round, full eyes of the Doctor sparkled—he wanted the skin of a snake of this species for his collection, and here was a glorious specimen. Laying his flowers on one side, and picking up a dry stick that the river had floated down and kept whirling in one of its eddies near the shore, he soon stretched it dead upon the grass.

How long the Doctor had been engaged flaying the snake he knew not; for in such an occupation, so gratifying to his scientific mind, time would flow heedlessly by. How long he had been engaged he knew not, but certainly it was a considerable time, when, just as he was about rising to depart, he was alarmed by hearing something close behind him. Now the grass around where he was sitting was very high and thick, quite overshadowing the Doctor's head; and when he turned his face toward the approaching noise he could not see any thing. The first idea that struck the Doctor's mind, was, that it was an Indian; and by squatting close to the ground, he might not be observed. Acting upon this suggestion, he laid himself

flat upon his face. And now the enemy was upon him, for he felt the grass bending down upon his head. There was no further hope of escaping detection. Springing to his feet with a dexterity that astonished himself, he found himself almost between the horns of an old buffalo bull. It would be indeed hard to tell which was the most alarmed. The bull, whose mind had been upon different subjects, was astonished at seeing such a fat object starting as if from the earth, and directly in his path; and the Doctor, who had certainly expected an Indian, was no less amazed at the sight of that grizzly-looking visage, thrust almost into his own. The bull was old and poor—the Doctor middle-aged and fat—the two extremes had met—Plenty staring astonished at the dread form of Famine.

There the two stood, not six feet apart. The Doctor, however much he might have desired it, could only retreat a couple of paces, for the river flowed swiftly in the rear; and the bull, either too much frightened, or thinking it derogatory to his well-established reputation, would not budge, or show the least signs of backing out. The Doctor was entirely unarmed; so there was no advantage on either side—it was to be a contest of impudence, eyes against eyes—whichever could outstare the other was to be the victor. And there, the very knowledge of his position made the Doctor brave—the hopelessness of retreat, and the distance from any human assistance—this would have made greater cowards than he brave enough to face a bull at any time. How the Doctor's protruding eyes endeavored to force down the fiery-looking globules of his opponent! They may talk as they please of the power the human eye has over a lion or a tiger, or such-like animals; but when it is brought up against a bull—and a buffalo-bull at that—it's no more than any other eye; or the Doctor had at last to come to this conclusion; for notwithstanding all the concentrated powers of his mind were in his looks, he could effect nothing—the bull stood there seemingly as determined as ever.

"Ugh! what shall I do?" groaned the Doctor, as the sweat began pouring down his face from his powerful exertions; "what shall I do?—what can the brute want with me?—not to eat me, I hope!"

At this thought a cold tremor danced through every nerve, and he felt a sudden weakness at the knee, which gave him a great inclination to pray; but the fear of giving confidence to the bull by any appearance of cowardice, restrained him. He felt that he was cornered this time; and for the first time in his life, he became aware of what is meant by the term "animal magnetism;" and it was hard to tell whether he magnetized the bull, or the bull him; but certain it is, that they were in close connection—rather closer than prudence would allow, had she any share in the arrangement.

"What a pickle for a New York M. D.!" moaned the Doctor;

"this all comes of my love for science! I ought to have a monument erected to my memory when I die! But what if this bull takes a notion to examine my construction—to dissect me with those clumsy horns! I'll be a monument then myself—a monument to downright stupidity, to wander so far away without a weapon larger than a lancet. Plague on the bull, I say! Is he going to stand there all day, gazing as if he never before saw a doctor?"

But notwithstanding all the Doctor's looks of concentrated wisdom, the bull stood there, fixed and immovable as fate itself. The Doctor began to get flurried; human nerves couldn't stand it much longer. A sudden thought, like the dawn of hope, came across his mind. Moving backward by little and little, keeping his eyes at the same time steadfastly fixed upon those of his opponent, he at last stood upon the very edge of the river; further retreat there was not. Now the Doctor was going to try an experiment—rather a dangerous one, it must be confessed; he had somewhere read of a method used in frightening cross and vicious dogs, and he saw no reason why it should not be practiced as successfully on bulls. With a beautiful and dexterous maneuver, he changed his whole order of battle; withdrawing his half-defeated front, in a moment his rear was made the van, and a battery that had not heretofore been in the engagement was now unmasked, and thrust forward to take its share in the contest. It was a military maneuver; General Scott could not have done it better. However, for fear the reader might give too much credit to the Doctor for this splendid movement, of making the rear the front, and that, too, done in the face of an enemy, it ought to be stated that he had served three seasons in the militia, as surgeon of a regiment, under the particular command of General Morris.

This change of position gave the Doctor a decided advantage, and his opponent seemed already anxious to retreat. The Doctor was quick to observe these manifestations of confusion, and hastened to follow up his advantage, by advancing slowly and cautiously to the attack. No wonder the bull was somewhat astonished at the sudden metamorphosis before him. The Doctor was now upon his hands and feet, his coat-tails hanging down over his shoulders, like trailing banners, and his two eyes looking through between his outstretched legs, as if sighting for the most vulnerable part in the head of his adversary. He certainly made a singular appearance, something in the shape of a naked hogshead on four legs.

How the eyes of the bull stared at this moving mountain! He snorted forth his astonishment and fear, but though apparently so much alarmed, he retreated but a few steps; he would not yield so easily. The Doctor, who had followed him up, was now compelled to stop also; it was still dangerous to venture too near

"Boh!" yelled the Doctor.

But the bull only shook his head.

"Boh! boh! boh!" yelled the other, at every cry raising one of his legs and kicking out violently into the air; while, for a further accompaniment, his hands kept a constant agitation among the grass.

This was too much for the bull to take. He considered it a regular challenge; shaking his head and bellowing his displeasure, he was springing upon the Doctor, when the sharp crack of a rifle was heard at a little distance, and the huge beast fell forward upon his head, and rolled over dead upon the grass.

The Doctor owed his preservation to 'Ziah, who had come upon the two belligerents entirely unexpected, and, seeing the evident defeat of his friend, had not delayed a moment in taking his part. The Doctor, though profuse in his gratitude, could not help feeling confused at being seen in such a questionable position, even though it was by 'Ziah, whose knowledge of science went no further than his nose.

"What in the name of wonder, Doctor, were you doing on your all-fours?" asked 'Ziah, after he had leisurely seated himself on the head of the dead buffalo. "At first I thought it was a regular set-to between a white b'ar and a bull, for I could only see a part of the strange-looking animal, 'cos the grass was high. So I watched for a long time, and was determined to see them fit it out without helping wun or t'other, for you see I'm always for fair play; but when I heard your voice I waked up, and I jist give it to the old feller right through the heart."

"'Ziah," replied the Doctor, as he stood panting from his exertions, "I don't want you to mention this little circumstance to the Captain, or he'll certainly write a chapter about it in his lying journal. I was just trying an experiment, 'Ziah—nothing but an experiment I can assure you—experiment is the life of science, and we wise men are oftentimes put into strange positions, which might seem unaccountable to the ignorant, but are perfectly apparent to the learned."

With this explanation 'Ziah appeared satisfied, for he had a wonderful opinion of the Doctor's knowledge; and however he thought within himself, outwardly he showed, by his deference, that he was fully aware of the impressive nature of the Doctor's experiment. Helping the Doctor to gather up his wilted flowers and weeds, the two returned to camp; where, for the remainder of the day, the Doctor appeared to be busy drying his rattlesnake-skin, which had been procured under such disadvantageous circumstances.

CHAPTER V.

FAINT, YET PURSUING.

THE morning succeeding the events narrated in our former chapter, dawned fresh and fair. All traces of the storm had disappeared from the heavens; and when the sun rose, it was as if upon a new creation, when every thing was bright and beautiful. The grass seemed to have taken a new start, for the parched-up ground had drank a sufficient draught of water; and the sickening verdure of yesterday was lost in the bright green of to-day. A soft, mild breeze came up with the sun, and poured new life upon the earth. The drops of rain hung thick and heavy on the tender blades of grass, and in the rising sun, gleamed like myriads of diamonds sparkling in their light green settings.

Norwood and his young charge were alone upon the plain. He could hear or see nothing of his two companions; and though he had fired his pistol several times when day came on, yet he could get no response. Still, they continued on their course, directing their way in a north-easterly direction, so as to strike the Arkansas somewhere near to the encampment—at every step hoping to come across some appearance of Fritz or Sib. But the sun came up, and climbed some distance on her daily course, and no living object met their anxious eyes. The plain stretched solitary and silent on every side. Norwood judged that he must be several leagues from the Indian camp, and consequently felt but little fear of being pursued, or if pursued, but little chance of being found in such a vast wilderness. Coming near a small pool of water which the last night's rain had formed, he resolved to rest a few hours, in order to let his young companion be better prepared for the journey on foot to the Arkansas, which now appeared to be inevitable.

"Come, Rose," said he, sitting down upon the margin of the pool—"Come, sit down here by my side, and rest your wearied limbs. I am certain you are very much fatigued, for I feel as if it would be impossible to go much further without rest. Besides, my clothes are still well soaked with rain; and a couple of hours' exposure in this fine sun will make them more comfortable. Come, take this buffalo-robe off your shoulders, and I will spread it upon the grass, so that you will have something to sit on."

Rose did as she was desired, and Norwood now, for the first time, had an opportunity of remarking the small yet beautifully-proportioned figure of his charge. She was dressed in the costume of the *senoritas* of New Mexico; for old Sib, in his an-

nual journeys to Santa Fe, always returned with two or three *enaguas*, or petticoats, and a *reboso* or two, which he obtained in exchange for some of his beaver-skins. A beautiful pair of beaded moccasins covered her tiny feet, and the colinche-colored *enagua*, only falling half-way below her knee, showed the delicately-turned ankle, without a covering of any kind. A nice, clean chemise, fastened round the throat with a couple of small silver buttons, covered the upper-part of her girlish person, with the exception of her arms, which were naked; and on her head was the graceful *reboso*, of an azure hue, which hung in rich folds over her left shoulder, and flowing almost to her knees. Her complexion was of the clear Mexican, in which every thing is chaste and subdued; with just enough blood in the cheeks to be faintly visible, like a rose seen through a darkened veil. She was very young—not more than twelve summers had ripened on her brow—and though her form and features were those of a child, yet in the full dark eye there was a glance occasionally that told of an older spirit, ripened amid the solitudes of the wilderness.

Norwood gazed upon her with something of astonishment! He had seen faces that were fairer, eyes of a darker hue, and hair of a finer gloss; but he had never seen one that combined so much of the beautiful with the spiritual; she appeared to him almost like the incarnation of a beautiful dream, lovely and enchanting, and swelling with the glories of the coming future. Her whole countenance was like one of those still mountain lakes, that reflect the clouds, the birds, and every thing that moves across its glassy surface. Norwood could scarcely think it possible that the fairy-like creature beside him was the offspring of the rough mountaineer, Sib. Her face had none of the Anglo-Saxon characteristics, but was purely Mexican in every particular. Norwood, whose curiosity and interest were very much excited concerning this wild mountain flower, determined to ask more particularly of her tastes and habits.

"Well, Rose," he began, "how far is your mountain home from this?"

"Oh, it is many long leagues away," she replied, with a sadness of voice, as if mourning for its quiet roof once more; "it is many days' journey from here, in one of the retired valleys of the Wet Mountains. Oh! it is a beautiful place; and if you should ever come there, you would never want to leave it."

"But is it not very lonely to be forever shut up within those mountains?" asked Norwood; "I suppose you see but few persons in that wild region, and they are as wild as the scenery surrounding you."

"Ah! no," she replied, "I do not think it lonely; for there are birds and flowers in summer; and in the winter I have my goats and mountain sheep; and then my father sits beside the fire at night, and tells me stories, beautiful stories, of a world

far, far beyond this plain, where there are such grand cities and so many lovely people. I can't help but dream of those things he mentions; and then I wish to be with my thoughts. But when he tells me of so much unhappiness, and of so much wickedness in that distant land, I am thankful that my home is where it is. Oh! sir, if you would only live there with us," she continued, taking one of his hands in both of hers, "I am sure it would be much happier: for then, when my father would be out with his traps, you would stay with me, and tell me of things that sometimes come in my dreams, or haunt me when alone upon the mountains. I know you're from that grand world of which I have heard so little. And though my father often told me that all the people therein were bad, I am sure that you are not—my heart tells me you are not—and I will like you so much, only come with us to the mountains."

This was the language of nature; and Norwood's whole heart answered the appeal of those upturned eyes and pleading words. Child as she was, and nurtured in loneliness, far removed from any of her kind, her soul was but the reflex of all that was innocent and beautiful.

"Ah!" sighed Norwood to himself, "what a glorious creature is here lost to the world. But rather it should be thus than that a single ray of that angel purity be quenched in polishing for her part in life."

"Yes, Rose," he continued, aloud, "I will certainly see you in safety to your own house; but what security have you that the Indians will not return again, and carry you off a second time?"

"The Indians did not mean me any harm," she replied; "they came across me by chance, and picked me up as they would any other stray creature. Though they watched me night and day, I was well treated. It is not likely they will return, for they can hope for nothing from my capture."

After a short pause she again spoke; but in a low and melancholy voice, as if communing with herself.

"And yet, I have suffered much from the Indians; but that was long, long ago—long before I knew my father."

"Your father!" exclaimed Norwood; "is not Sib your parent?"

"Ah!" replied Rose, raising her large eyes, now humid with tears, "Sib is more than a parent—he brought me from the Comanches when I was a little thing, and almost dying with starvation. And he's been so kind to me—the only one I ever remember to have been kind; and I love him so much—he is the only one I ever loved—and he calls me his daughter—his darling Rose! He is my only friend—my father!"

Norwood was inexpressibly affected with the pathos with which this was uttered. Her whole history rose in a glance before him. Stolen from some one of the villages on the Rio

Grande—her parents probably massacred—adopted by her captors, or intended as the slave of some Comanche chief—then purchased by Sib for a plug of tobacco, or some other trifle, and transferred to his hut in the mountains, to enliven his declining days—all this was read in a moment, in the moistened eye and hanging head of his beautiful companion. Norwood now resolved within himself, that money, nor time, nor trouble, should deter him from hunting up her parents, if yet living, and restoring their long-lost child, providing he could get any clue whatever to direct his search.

“Come, Rose,” said he, leaning her head upon his breast; “don’t grieve—we will all love you. But, do you remember any thing whatever of the time you were taken away by the Comanches?”

“Ah, no!” she replied; “it is long, long ago. Yet, sometimes, as if in a dream, a dim figure seems bending over me, with eyes and face something like my own, and whispers of some other home, where are vineyards beside a river, that winds through broad, green *milpas*. Then, when I try to listen more distinctly, every thing is gone, and I am sadder than before.”

The two then continued silent for a long time. Norwood was thinking how he might restore the stolen child to her parents; and if no parents were to be found, why then he dreamed of taking her to his own home, where he would be father and brother to the lost one; and this last thought, it must be confessed, was a pleasing one. Rose was apparently communing with the past, and endeavoring to catch another glimpse of that dim form that her heart said was her mother! The reverie was at last broken by Norwood.

“Come, my child,” said he, “come—lay yourself down upon this robe and sleep a while. I have my rifle to put in order, and will watch for a few hours; when, if we hear nothing from Sib or Fritz, we must set out alone, and find our road to the Arkansas the best way we can.”

Rose, as obedient as any child, did as she was directed, and soon appeared to be in a sound sleep. Norwood, while busily employed in clearing his rifle, could not but often think of her who was so providentially put under his charge; and more than a dozen times did his gentle hands arrange the *reboso*, so as to shade the sun from off her face. He was certain he had never seen any face so beautiful; and, childish as it was, none so full of the deep, impassioned feelings of a guileless heart. There was a soul within that form whose dawning already gave promise of a glorious fulfillment.

Having succeeded in extracting the wet charge from his rifle, and loaded it afresh, he seated himself at a little distance, and began to think of the distance yet to be traveled, and the difficulties yet to be undergone, before he could place Rose in

safety within the shelter of his camp on the Arkansas. Insensibly his eyes closed, his head drooped, and a slumber deep and refreshing crept upon him.

When he awoke, the sun was nearly at his zenith, and he found his young companion wide awake and sitting by his side, shading the sunbeams from his eyes by the position of her body. In a few minutes they set out upon their long and lonely journey.

Rose was happy and cheerful, and, walking alongside of Norwood, kept him in continued conversation. She had so many questions to ask about the beautiful world that he came from, and so much to tell him of the happy times they would have in the mountains, that the hours passed away most delightfully; and neither seemed to imagine that they were upon the wild and lonely desert, far away from the succor of their friends.

Thus they continued with but little intermission, until the sun was beginning to dip his disk behind the level prairie; when Norwood, thinking it was time to stop for the night, picked out a place where the grass was thick and green, and gathering with great difficulty an armful of buffalo-chips, struck a fire, and leaving Rose beside it, started out with the vain hope of shooting a buffalo or antelope for supper. But, after traveling round and round until it began to grow dark, he was forced to return without even seeing a living creature. But few buffaloes frequented this region, for he could see but few of their traces; and what was still more gloomy, was the anticipation of traveling all day to-morrow without any thing to eat. For, even if they were on the direct road to the Arkansas, Norwood felt that it was but a bare possibility of coming in sight of any game until in the valley of the river. He felt weak and faint, not having eaten any thing since the evening preceding; and how must his tender companion suffer, who had also been as long without food. It was with much chagrin he retraced his way back to the fire, and communicated to Rose the result of his foray.

"Never mind," said she, smiling; "I feel so happy, now, that I have no room for hunger;—happy, because I shall soon see my father; and also, because you will come with us to the mountains, where you will see my beautiful mountain goats. Yes," she continued, with a sparkling eye, "and I'll take you away up among the mountains, and show you such beautiful flowers!—and I'll bring you to the boiling fountain, and tell you the story that the Indians have told about its wondrous waters. Oh, sir!—I'll show you so many things you never dreamed of; and I'm sure, when you see them all, you will never want to leave us!"

Norwood, who felt that he could never tire when listening to her innocent prattle, seated himself beside her, and asked her

many questions about her manner of living, her thoughts, her feelings, and every thing that could give him an insight into her character. He certainly found her to be a wonderful creature—a being far removed from the contact of busy life—who had grown among the vast solitudes of nature—whose voice alone had been her instruction, filling her mind with beautiful, bright visions, and a longing for something felt, yet never seen. Her soul had expanded with the busy thoughts engendered by her solitary life, and had far outgrown her years. Every thing was to her at once a mystery and a pleasure. The winds at night among the cedars; the mountain rocking with the thunder's voice; the quiet valley and the rushing torrent; the hoary winter and the summer sky; birds, trees, leaves and flowers—all were but well-loved voices, yet whose language was of things she wished, yet feared, to know—things that are not visible to the mortal sense, but to the spirit come like whisperings of another world. Her soul was like the mountain lake, whose clear breast the slightest breath would ruffle, and throw up sunflashing thoughts, like waves, until the whole would be alive with motion and with music. And yet, her life was not all gladness; for dreams of the past would sometimes fill her soul with a tender melancholy. Dreams of her parents, whom she knew not; of her home, where was it?—of her childhood, and where passed? These came across her like a shadow, yet faint and thin, which the first sun was to disperse. For hers was a joyous being; and the cloud that sometimes crossed her spirit was but as a veil, which did not hide, but made every thing of a tenderer, chaster hue.

With what care did Norwood smooth the robe for her bed, and wrapping her carefully in it, with her head resting upon his knee, for a pillow, watched her upturned, thankful face, until sleep, like a shadow, stole upon her; and then, when her eyes were closed, turned his to the stars, and thought they were not so beautiful as the soul-lit eyes of the child beside him.

It was a clear, moonlight night; nothing was heard but the dismal howl of the serenading coyote. It was a long and lonely watch for Norwood. His thoughts for a long time kept him awake—thoughts of his home, of the morrow, of the loneliness of his situation; and thoughts too of Rose, who slumbered so calmly beside him. But when day dawned, fresh and fair, he was asleep too, and his wearied head was pillowed upon his hands, and lying near to Rose's; his brown locks had entwined with the dark hair of her beside him. Were their dreams also woven with each other? Rose's, at least, were of him—and him alone.

Long before the sun was up, they were again on their journey. The plain still stretched its unbroken surface far before them. Nothing was to be seen or heard—silence and desolation were everywhere. The small pools that they met with

yesterday in great abundance, and which were formed by the preceding rain, were now disappearing, being absorbed by the thirsty ground, and dried up by the warm rays of the sun; so that, in addition to hunger, they were also to suffer from want of water. It was in vain that he cast his eyes continually on every side, hoping that fortune would favor him with the sight of a buffalo or antelope; no such animal appeared—not even the wolf of the preceding night could be distinguished. Norwood thought not of himself—all his feelings were enlisted in the sufferings of his delicate companion; who, though apparently full of hope and gladness, was but veiling her sensations under the assumed look of joy. Norwood supported her with his arm; her walk was yet firm and steady; but as the sun grew warm, he felt her form hanging heavier, though her words and looks were still of hope and joy. He was aware that she would soon be too weak to walk, unless something could be got to strengthen her. Placing her upon the buffalo-robe which he spread out upon the grass, he told her to rest herself, while he would take a short walk upon the prairie to look for game.

But after walking for an hour in a circular course, he had to return without either seeing water or game. By this time the sun was in the middle of his course, and his rays poured hot and oppressive upon the plain. Norwood felt his own strength giving way, and it was with a deep depression of spirits he again wound his arm round Rose and started. However, his hopes were soon kindled by the words of his companion, who, though sinking with faintness, still talked of the happy times they were to have when once more at her home in the mountains. Norwood was now certain that, if upon the right course, he would be able to reach the Arkansas by sunset; and even if it were not in the neighborhood of the camp, it would not matter much, for all kinds of prairie game were to be found in great abundance everywhere along the valley of the river. Cheering his companion with these anticipations, they walked along with quicker steps; but soon the strength of Rose gave way entirely, and she sunk from his arm, helpless and faint, upon the grass.

"Rose," said he, kneeling down beside her, "cheer up; it can't be far to the river, where we will have plenty of everything we want; come, let me take you in my arms; your form is light, and I am strong enough to carry you twice the distance yet remaining."

"Oh!" replied Rose, "I am strong enough in spirit, I assure you, but my limbs are weak; let us rest for awhile, and I think I will be able to walk much further."

But this Norwood would not permit; it was necessary for him to go as far as he could while his strength lasted. Taking the fragile form of his companion in his arms, and cheering her with kind and hopeful words, he again started on his weary

way. At every step he expected to see something that would give him cause for hope, and at every step he was disappointed. The boundless desert still stretched itself unbroken and solitary before him. Rose lay nestling on his breast, as if her hopes, her thoughts, were all in him. Her beauty and her helplessness gave him renewed energy. Mile after mile was traveled, and still he flagged not; he was himself astonished at his tireless strength. Then again he was alarmed at the appearance of Rose; her eyes were sunken, and had lost all that radiance which always made Norwood think of stars; and her full, round cheeks were pale and hollow; but that which was the most changed was her voice so rich, so full, so musical, now so husky and low, and sounding like the notes of a broken viol. And yet she smiled so sweetly in his face, and talked such hopeful words, that his very soul was touched, and he almost felt as if she were some beautiful immortal spirit whom fate had given to his arms.

But something in the distance now attracted all his attention—there were living creatures in the wilderness besides themselves, for, far away before him, just breaking the horizon's edge, were several dark, tiny objects, moving toward them apparently with great rapidity, for at every moment they grew larger and larger, and more distinct. When yet at a great distance, Norwood's keen eye soon detected what they were. A large troop of wild horses were galloping along, rejoicing in their strength and freedom. Onward they came, as if to gaze upon these intruders upon their own wild pastures. Coming till within a hundred yards, they stopped, and with outstretched necks and starting eyes, stood for a moment looking upon our travelers, then, wheeling, as if satisfied with their inspection, they galloped away on their course, their floating manes and flowing tails streaming upon the wind.

There was something cheering to both Rose and Norwood in this exhibition of the wild children of the desert; it was looking upon life again; and hope that was almost gone, danced vividly before them. Norwood felt renovated, and after a few minutes' rest, again took Rose in his arms, and started confidently forward. This time hope did not deceive; for after a half-hour's walk, he found himself suddenly as on the verge of a tremendous precipice, caused by a deep depression of the plain, as if it had been scooped out in ages long past, for a channel to some wild river. This chasm was scarcely fifty yards across from the level on which he stood to the verge beyond, and so level and unbroken was the plain on each side, that a person might almost walk into it without being aware of its existence. Looking down into the fissure, Norwood thought that he distinguished a pool of water, but at an awful depth below. The bottom lay in a deep, dark, shadow; it was almost like looking into the hollow earth, so dim and dismal did every thing appear. Yes, there was water below!—this news was indeed cheering, but to descend where

he was, the almost perpendicular wall of the chasm, was not to be hoped for. Yet Norwood well knew that there must be a passage down to the water somewhere near; the troop of wild horses must have crossed this mighty rent in the earth at some point; for, as far as his eye could carry on either hand, he could see its dark shadow winding like a huge black snake across the plain. Leaving Rose sitting on the grass, he hastened along its edge to find some place where he could descend with safety. After walking a short distance, he found the wished-for path which had been worn deeply into the dry, hard side of the gorge, by the feet of numberless animals that had made this their well-known crossing-place from one plain to the other. Returning with eager haste, he again took the form of the uncomplaining child in his arms, and, after a toilsome and dangerous descent of several hundred feet, found himself beside the long-hoped-for spring.

But scarcely had they quenched their thirst with the cool, fresh water, when they were startled by a shout on the plain above. Looking up—and there, almost overhead, was the figure of some one gazing down upon them. Norwood sprung for his rifle; but almost instantly Rose cried out:

“We are saved!—we are saved! There’s my father—and Fritz, too, is with him!”

And so indeed it was Fritz and Sib, who now made the silence ring with their hearty shouts, as they came bounding down the precipitous path; and then what a joyous meeting on all sides! Sib and Fritz first embracing Rose, and then wringing Norwood’s tingling hand in regular succession, until they had saluted each a dozen times. Explanations were soon made; and it is enough to say, that knowing from the alarm in the Indian camp that Norwood was discovered, and Sib having heard the delicate call of Rose, knew that she was with him—then, to create as much confusion as possible, in order to distract the attention of the savages from the pursuit, the two broke in among the horses and succeeded in frightening them, so that they dashed through the encampment, overturning every thing in their course. Then they hunted out the rendezvous, but not finding Norwood there, waited for his appearance till after daylight, when they were forced to leave, for fear of being discovered by the Indians.

They knew that Norwood and Rose had both escaped, and were out somewhere upon the plain. Their business then was to hunt them up; but after circling round and round, the whole day, they could discover no “sign” whatever. And it was not till some time in the forenoon of the second day, that they came across the fire that Norwood had kindled the preceding night, which was the first clue they had, and which Sib followed up with the sagacity of a hound, until it led them to the present spot, where they were discovered.

All their sufferings were forgotten, in the joy of again meeting with their friends. The two horses which Fritz had left on the plain above were brought down and picketed; and old Sib, with a light and joyous heart, shouldered his "old iron," and after being gone for half-an-hour up the ravine, returned, bearing on his shoulder a young antelope that he had killed, which, with Fritz's assistance, was soon roasted over a large fire of buffalo-chips. Norwood and Rose made a delicious supper after their two long days' fast, and the night closed upon as happy a group as ever assembled together in that wild and lonely land.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DAY OF RECKONING.

THE next evening, our now joyous party arrived in sight of their camp on the Arkansas. Fritz had given his horse to Rose, who had already, in a measure, recovered her former cheerfulness and vivacity, and now delighted the whole party by her happy looks and gladsome words. Old Sib could scarcely contain his delight, in once more seeing his "darling child"—as he affectionately called her. The whole day he never left her side, but trotted along at her horse's head, and chattering continually about a thousand different things, seemed as if he never would tire listening to himself; for according to his own words, he was "so happy," which every one could see in his sparkling looks, and rattling talk. Norwood was happy also; all his past sufferings were forgotten in the joy of seeing Sib and his young charge again together. And how his heart warmed beneath their grateful looks, as Rose narrated all the kindness he had shown her, in their solitary journey through the desert.

But now they were on one of those hills in the rear of their camp. Every thing was apparently as they had left it. A thin, blue column of smoke, rising upward from the valley, gave token that the Doctor was busy preparing supper. Even his burly form could be distinguished moving about, as if busily engaged in that heartfelt occupation. The others were lying about on the grass, luxuriating no doubt in imagination on the results of the Doctor's labors.

"O, wee haw!" yelled Fritz, in the real Comanche style. This brought the loiterers to their feet. The Doctor was the first to recognize his friends, and sent back an answering shout with the most stentorian lungs. Then the Captain, Ziah, Pasqual, and Dutch broke into a chorus of shrill whoopings, each one apparently endeavoring to outdo the other. But not satisfied with this, the Captain was determined to give them a salute in real military style. Ordering his men to take their rifles, he drew them up in a single line; and after a few direc-

tions, gave them the word to fire, which was done in a manner entirely satisfactory, for each went it on his own hook; the Doctor, who was at the head of the line, commencing the *feu-de-joie*, which was taken up in regular succession by the rifles of the others, until it ended with a tremendous discharge from the old escopet of Pasqual. This exhibition was followed by another attempt at an Indian yell, which was taken up and answered in a more masterly manner by Sib and Fritz.

"Hush!" exclaimed Norwood; "don't you see we are going to have visitors?" at the same time pointing to five or six horsemen who appeared on the other side of the river; having apparently descended the bluff without being observed by the Captain's party below, who were too busy with their military display to notice any thing except themselves and their returning friends.

"Them's mountain-boys," said Sib, after taking a short look at them. "They're going to cross the river, and I'spect it's their intention to camp with us to-night. They're welcome, I say, if they behave themselves."

"Come on," said Norwood, "let us join our friends at camp. I'll wager a good deal that the Doctor has something fine for supper, which I long to be at, as I have not yet recovered from the effects of my long fast. Come, Rose, let you and I gallop ahead; we'll let them know you two are coming," he shouted, as the two horses, with their riders, sprung down the hillside, toward the camp.

Norwood and Rose had scarcely alighted from their panting horses, when the party they had before seen across the river also arrived. Leaving their rough prairie horses at a little distance, under the charge of one of their companions, the rest, five in number, approached the fire, where the Doctor and all the others were busily engaged, welcoming the arrival of Norwood and his young companion. They were wild, dare-devil-looking fellows, dressed in the usual garb of mountaineers, buckskin hunting-shirt, and pants plentifully fringed, and showing a superabundant covering of grease and dirt. They were all armed with long, heavy rifles, and huge hunting-knives, secured in sheaths of raw buffalo-hide, which were firmly attached under the left arm to the buckskin belt. Their faces were apparently as dirty as their garments, and each one plentifully garnished with grizzly, sun-burnt beards, which, however, was but in keeping with every thing else belonging to their appearance. Norwood's attention was directed toward them by the evident uneasiness of Rose, who, either divining something not right in their appearance, or recognizing some one among them whom she feared, came up and tremblingly grasped his hand, as if by that mute action begging protection from some impending danger.

Coming till within a few feet of the fire, they all squatted

themselves on the ground, excepting one, who appeared to be their leader. This one came forward to where Norwood was standing, and touching his deer-skin cap by way of salute, commenced :

"I guess you're the captain, are you? Well, we want to keep company to-night. Hello! why, what are you doing with our Sis?" he exclaimed, with evident astonishment, as, for the first time, he caught sight of Rose's face, who endeavored, apparently in great fear, to shelter herself behind Norwood.

"Well, who'd 'a' thought it!" he continued, "to see *our* Rose so far away from home?—and with a stranger, at that! Come," he continued, approaching Rose, who now clung to Norwood with the wildest energy. "Come, child, and give your brother a kiss; don't you know Jake? Come, none of your foolery," he continued, as he reached forward to grasp her.

But his advance was suddenly brought to a full stop by a ringing blow from Norwood's fist, that came like a catapult against his right temple, and sent him spinning like a whirligig, until he found himself sprawling on the ground at a greater distance than he expected.

Giving a yell of rage, he sprung to his feet, and drawing his hunting-knife, leaped toward his opponent, with every evil passion of the heart glaring from his small, black eyes.

Norwood saw him coming, but Rose clung so about him that he had no chance of drawing his pistol; and it was well for him that he had some one near to assist him. 'Ziah had seen the whole fracas; and now, when Norwood was in such a predicament, he proved himself a peacemaker indeed. Doubling his iron-like fist, he sprung forward with the most surprising agility, and as the mountaineer was about plunging his knife into Norwood's unprotected breast, gave him a blow on the cheek, with such stunning effect, that he fell to the earth as if struck by a thunderbolt.

At the sight of this sudden mishap to their companion, the others sprung to their feet; and one huge, gigantic fellow whose face was scarred in many a fight, striding in advance of the rest, planted himself before his prostrate friend, and baring two brawny arms, thus commenced :

"Strangers, if you want to fight rough and tumble, or any other ways, jist say the word, and we'll at you like a house afire. Fair play's fair play all the world over—and I would jist like to see that long grandad give me one of his tifters; two ag'in' one's not fair, I say: but hyer's one that kin take his own part in a b'ar-hug any time—rifle or no rifle—knife or no knife! Jist say the word, and hyer's at you!"

Norwood began to think that a general fight was inevitable; for the others, having assisted their overthrown companion to his feet, were now crowding round where his little party stood,

and with fierce and angry looks awaited but the signal to commence. His own companions were not in the least daunted by the odds against them. The Doctor pulled off his coat, and rolling up his sleeves, displayed an arm that few could gaze on unterrified; he felt brave enough, and was certainly big enough, for any three of his opponents. 'Ziah was as calm and as sanctimonious as ever; the only thing that appeared excited about him were his fingers, which were twitching violently, as if they had a mind to grab something, while the Captain, though the smallest in the crowd, felt indignant enough to annihilate a whole army of such "greasy vagabonds," as he, in his wrath, politely termed them. Suddenly their opponents were riven as if by some invisible power, and Fritz came bounding into the circle with the velocity of a cannon-ball.

"Back—back!" he cried, at the same time waving them off with his rifle. "Is this the way you treat my friends? Ay! you're here, are you?" he exclaimed, as his eye lit on the huge form of the one who had last spoken. Stepping up to the mountaineer, whose whole form appeared to quail beneath his flashing eye, he exclaimed:

"Steve Rayney, I have long wanted to meet you—I have got you now, and by the Lord who made us, you or I must go under! you're a coward, or you wouldn't have eluded me so long. I've been hunting you for three years—ever since you murdered—yes, murdered," he shouted, while his whole form seemed terribly convulsed—"my young, innocent brother; that was the worst of all your damning deeds. You knew that I would hunt you up; and like a coward that you are, you avoided me; for innocent blood was on your soul, and you trembled when you heard of me, Fritz Collins, who never lies—who never murders—who will never forgive you, you murdering hell-hound!"

The other, who at first showed a little fear, was at last aroused by the denunciations of Fritz; and seeing that there was no retreat, made up by blustering what he wanted in courage. But Fritz stopped him in the midst of his harangue, and pointing to his rifle, said:

"Let this do our talking—it tells no lies; you must fight me, Steve Rayney, before you leave this spot. I will fight you fairly—but if I should act right, I would blow your brains out where you stand; but Fritz Collins never took advantage of any man—would to Heaven I could say the same of you! There's no use in talking," he continued, as he saw the other about to speak, "you must fight, and that too this minute, and upon this spot!"

The friends and companions of Rayney now gathered round their comrade, offering their services in the approaching conflict; not one endeavoring to interpose between the enemies, but all seemed anxious that the fight should go on without any delay. Rayney now appeared to have regained his confidence

and as he shouted to Fritz to come on, his rugged form seemed bursting with the passion whose workings could be seen upon his face.

Norwood wished very much to interfere, but he saw that all hopes of working upon Fritz's feelings would be useless; and again, when he considered that it was to avenge a brother's death, he did not wonder at this display of passionate determination from his companion. Leaving Rose in charge of Sib, who now came up, he accompanied Fritz a hundred yards or so from camp, where the others had already arrived, and which was to be the spot for the encounter.

One of the mountaineers now gave the conditions of the battle, which were of a simple nature indeed. Each combatant was to be armed with rifle and hunting-knife; they were to be placed one hundred and fifty yards apart, and at the word were to advance toward each other, firing as they liked; when, if no one was killed, the combat was to be finished with the knife. These directions were given with a terrible distinctness, and struck Norwood's heart with a foreboding that almost made him look upon his friend as already dead. This was a combat of life and death; no satisfaction to be required or given until one or both should be stretched lifeless upon the sod. Yet Norwood did not fear for the coolness or dexterity of Fritz; but it was the nature of the *duello* that struck him with such a chill; a life was to be required—and in this it differed very much from civilized duels, which generally only demanded a harmless waste of powder and ball, to satisfy the wounded honor of the aggrieved.

Fritz appeared to have lost all his former excitement; he was now calm, cool, and determined—fully aware of the nature of the combat, and of what was required to render him victorious. His opponent was also apparently self-possessed. His form and make showed him to be possessed of twice as much strength as his lighter adversary; but this was of no advantage when the rifle was to be the weapon; all depended upon self-possession, and a superior skill in its use.

The ground was now measured off, but before they took their respective positions, their rifles were discharged in the air and reloaded afresh; knives were loosed in their sheaths, and the two then stood face to face, awaiting for the signal. The spectators of this wild contest stood a little to one side, and then a loud whoop from one of the mountaineers gave notice that the battle had commenced. The two advanced toward each other with slow and cautious steps—their rifles cocked and poised, ready to be discharged in a moment's time. Thus they continued slowly approaching each other, until they had advanced within a hundred yards—when Rayney suddenly stopped, and taking deliberate aim at the breast of his adversary, fired. Fritz, at the moment the trigger was touched, jerked his body a little to one side, and the bullet ripped up the side of his hunting-

shirt, and passed between his body and left arm. The movement and the crack of the rifle was so instantaneous, that Norwood thought his friend was done for, imagining his body to have thus started as it felt the wound. Fritz's dexterity had saved his life, and he still advanced as slowly and as cautiously as ever. The other, seeing his first fire thrown away, paused, and began reloading with as much dispatch as possible. Fritz now felt conscious of having him completely in his power, and on this account was in no hurry to take advantage of it. He continued approaching till within seventy or eighty yards, and until the other was about done reloading, when he stopped—his eye glanced along the barrel for a moment—and the bullet from his rifle went crashing through the brain of his opponent. Fritz had fully avenged his brother; it was a cruel deed that prompted him to act thus—and terribly was it atoned for.

Leaving the mountaineers to bury the body of their companion, Norwood and his men returned silently to their camp, and it was a long time before their usual flow of spirits could return; for Death, whether he strikes an enemy or friend, is still the same terrible being, and leaves a shadow wherever his foot has touched.

"That was well done, Fritz!" said old Sib, when they came up where he was sitting; "you've rid the earth of one villain; but there's still a great many like him, who ought to be sarved the same way. I had no fears of you, Fritz; I knowed you of old—you're a darling boy, and many's the time I prophesied you'd come to something great. Rose has been crying all the time; she was afeard something might happen you, and notwithstanding all my endeavors, would hide her eyes in my bosom. Look up," he continued, at the same time raising her head from his breast, where she had buried her eyes; "look up, child—here's Fritz, safe and sound, as I told you it would be!"

Rose raised her eyes, which were still swimming in tears, but as instantly hid them again, when she saw the person of the one approach from whose officious kindness Norwood had so gallantly rescued her.

"Why, hello!" exclaimed the stranger, as he approached; "I declare, here's the whole family, and Fritz into the bargain! Old dad, how do you do?" he continued, stretching out his hand to old Sib, who still sat upon the ground, apparently without so much as noticing him. "Well, I declare, you appear to have forgot your relations. Maybe you don't want to recognize your only son, since you've got sich fine company!" at the same time bowing, with sarcastic politeness, to Norwood, who was standing near by. "Yes," he continued, "I know the gentleman, and I'll take care to *remember* his kindness."

"Jake," exclaimed old Sib, in an excited voice, at the same moment starting to his feet, "you're a scoundrel!—you're no son of mine; it can't be, or you wouldn't be the villain you are,

without some recasting traits to your c'arakter. Ain't you ashamed to appear before my face, after what you done when you were last at home? I told you then never to return, or I'd forget your name was Jake Cone, and send a bullet through you as I would through a painter. What did you come here for, I'd like to know? To rob or to murder some of the traders, I 'spect, and then blame it on the Injins."

"Why, dad," replied the hopeful son, as soon as old Sib paused, apparently for want of breath, "you're too hard now; indeed you are. What'll these 'ere strangers think of me after the fine recommendation you have given me? I didn't come here for nothin' bad, I imagine—just out on a scout from Bent's Fort, and nothin' more, I assure you; so you see you're on the wrong track this time!"

"Maybe so," replied Sib; "but though I say it myself, I tell you, Jake, I don't believe you—you're too big a liar to believe the truth, even if it's spoke by yourself. Go and join your companions over there—you're not fit for decent company until you change your manners. Go along, I tell you; this child," pointing to Rose, who sat crouching at his feet, "is afeard of you, and so is every thing good afeard of you. Maybe you're after her this time; but I tell you, Jake, if you attempt to take this child away, I'll shoot you as I would a dog. I've said enough—go along, now, or I'll forget that I'm your father."

There was something in the language and appearance of the old man that completely silenced the young fellow; and he turned upon his heel with an abashed, yet vindictive look.

"Rose," said the old man, sitting down beside her and folding her affectionately in his arms, "don't be afraid; no harm shall happen you as long as I'm alive; and when I go under you'll have a warm friend in Fritz. Jake is a bad feller, but he'll never try again to carry you off from your old father; so don't cry; we'll soon be at our old home in the mountains, and then we'll be so happy!"

Leaving the old man and his child together, Norwood took Fritz aside, and inquired about this young fellow, who called himself Sib's only son, and why he wished to abduct Rose away from his father.

"He's as great a villain," began Fritz, "as Sib says he is; and if it had not been for my love for Sib, Jake and I would have had our scores settled long ago. He's a mongrel, born of a half-breed Mexican woman that Sib picked up somewhere in Taos. He's been a bitter pill for the old man. Nothing is bad enough for him to do, which is all owing principally to the training he got under Steve Rayney, who's done for now; though it would have saved many a wicked deed had he never been born. Jake is a great gambler; and on one of his excursions to Santa Fe, losing all his money, he broke into old Scully's store, and took away with him all the loose change he could lay his hands on,

which, however, was not much—only ten or twelve dollars I believe. He gambled this away the same night; he was playing monte, and the dealer was an old hag named Toulis, who followed various occupations, of which gambling was by far the most respectable. After his money was all gone, he said he had a fairy of a sister at home, and he would stake her against five dollars, which Senora Toulis agreed to, more to humor him than any thing else. This wager was also lost. A year or two passed away, when old Toulis, hearing by some means or other of the wonderful beauty and innocence of Rose, determined to become possessed of her, in order to train her up for sale, as she had many another poor girl. By threats and by promises, she persuaded Jake to attempt to carry her off, which he tried a couple of times, but was always frustrated by Sib. Old Toulis, who is a real hell-hound, when she has once scented any thing, encouraged him to further attempts. The last time, which was only this last spring, he nearly succeeded, having had Steve Rayney and a couple of others to assist him. Sib was in the mountains, hunting, when they came to his little cabin. They were just taking her away, in spite of all her prayers and struggles, when he fortunately returned, and saved her; but not till he had drawn a bead on Jake's heart. So, you see, that's the reason Rose was so alarmed at his appearance; and a good reason it is, too. Old Sib himself has almost got to dislike him, notwithstanding he is his father. But what they can be after, away out here, is more than I can tell, though it is for nothing good, I assure you. For, let me tell you, them persons he's with are the worst set of devils in the mountains—ready and willing for any thing, from robbing a cattle-yard to murdering a friend for his money. There's no dependence to be put in them—I know them every one; but the biggest scoundrel among them is Jake Cone!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE LEGEND OF THE BOILING SPRING.

THE first of October—that most beautiful of all the months—dawned fresh and fair, amid the mountains. The scene was lovely indeed. A narrow meadow, lying like a cradled child within a wild, deep glen, embosomed amid tall and barren mountains, whose bases were mostly fringed with the dark pine and cedar, but whose sides and summits were rough and precipitous with overhanging rocks. The meadow was fenced in on every side by a thick growth of shrubbery. It was a quiet, lonely place. The brooding silence seemed never to have been broken by the sound of living voices, or stirred by the wandering footsteps of the lonely trapper.

In the center of this small meadow was a circular mound, or hill, some twenty feet in height, broad at the base, but narrowing gradually as it rose, until at the summit it was scarcely over two paces in diameter. This mound was so regular in shape, that it appeared as if it had been the work of man, raised as a tumulus over some buried chief or king of a forgotten race. The whole meadow and mound were covered with long, wild grass, which was now changing to the yellow hue of autumn—the only living thing there that showed the touch of the decaying month—for all else was of a perpetual green. But that which gave the most interest to this solitary scene was a spring, right on the summit of this mound, whose waters were in continual ferment—boiling, hissing, and sparkling with an energy that gave it the appearance of a chafed spirit in angry commotion with itself. Yet, though the water danced and leaped, as if glad to see the light, but very little found its way down the sides of this huge basin—the most of it being absorbed in the sandy loam of which the whole hill was formed. Through winter and summer—through heat and cold, this wild fountain still kept dancing; its waters undiminished, and as bright and glancing as when first it saw the light.

The morning was indeed lovely; such a one as that season of the year can alone produce, when earth and sky seem to wear a smile of pleasing melancholy, and every sound is creative of deep, yet placid thoughts. Every thing in the glen was yet in a deep shadow—the sun only lighting the tops of some of the highest mountains—when two figures were seen emerging from the dark fringe of woods, and directing their way across the meadow, to the fountain mound in its center. It was Rose and Norwood, on their way to the boiling spring, which she had so often talked of, and which had been to her as a sacred shrine, where her heart had bowed beneath the deep feelings that solitude created. It was a sacred spot to her; for Indian tradition had hallowed it with many a beautiful legend; and her vivid fancy there delighted to roam at will, and picture the dim woods as filled with voices—the mountain rocks as those enormous houses she had heard of, yet never seen—the sparkling globules of the heaving water as fairy eyes laughing in her own—in a word, every thing that there surrounded her seemed filled with whisperings of another world.

As the two seated themselves side by side, upon the long grass that overlooked the spring, the water seemed to have recognized a long and well-known visitor; for its upward-shooting columns seemed to come with greater force, and the froth and foam danced, and threw such diamond drops, and gave forth such liquid, laughing sounds, as if the fountain were filled with joyous beings, who were clapping their hands to see a well-loved face again. And Rose, who had never been so long absent from her laughing spring, clapped her hands, and

shouted her happiness at again seeing what was almost to her the face of an only companion.

"And this is that boiling spring you so often told me of," said Norwood, after he had witnessed his companion's happy glee. "It is a lonely place; but yet, I do not wonder at your loving it so much; for, in this bubbling water one can fancy the loving words of distant friends, speaking of home and its joys."

Rose seemed in a moment to have been lowered from her bright and beautiful heaven. These words of Norwood recalled her thoughts to what she was. He had a home where many lived who loved him—no wonder the slightest thing would recall their beaming faces and their loving words. But for her there were no such delights—no pleasure in reminiscences—nothing to look back upon that would create a thrill of happiness at the thought of its return. Norwood, who had seen the effect his words created upon so sensitive a mind, was himself deeply affected. Opening his arms, she threw herself upon his breast, and there gave free egress to her bitter tears.

Norwood was now, next to Sib, the only being on earth she loved. She had attached herself to him from his first appearance; and during their journey to the mountains she was never so happy as when riding alongside, and hearing him talk of things that were to her wonderful and strange. In him she saw something so superior to her childish idea of persons, that he at once became the possessor of every thought, and hope, and wish, that were not already her adopted father's; and indeed, at times, she was aware that this feeling was gradually undermining even the share that Sib possessed. She knew that her feelings for him who had rescued her from starvation and servitude were such as she should feel; but yet, she felt certain Norwood had those deeper ones, that probably would have slumbered forever, had he not been thrown across her path. She could not analyze her feelings, nor did she want to; he was every thing, and more than she had ever fancied; and her young heart twined itself with his, until her very being became a part.

Norwood had beguiled many a tedious hour by listening to her fresh and heartsome words. She was yet a child to him, and his fond heart had often pictured the joy to restore her to her parents; and, if not living or to be found, then, it must be confessed, it was a more pleasing thought to take her to his own home, and qualify her for the position in society which his station in life would give him the means of doing. Insensibly she had so won upon him, that he felt sure it would be a dark day when he would be forced to quit her, even with the hope of again returning. The beauty and the originality of her thoughts, and the high, poetic temperament of her untaught imagination, were, for a child, wonderful; and Norwood often in his own

soul, confessed, when seeing her whole form swelling with some innate feeling, that he had never dreamed of any creature so beautiful, and so full of the warm sympathies of nature.

"Come, Rose," he said, after having in a manner soothed her feelings, "you have promised to tell me some of the beautiful stories connected with this spring. It is a fitting time for a wild legend, such as I know you intend telling me."

"Oh, yes!" she replied, her face brightening as she spoke; "I have a great many to tell you, which I had from an old Shoshone woman, who used to visit us very often, but is now dead. I have many beautiful ones, but these I'll keep for some other time. Now I will tell you one that I often think about, when I come here to look into this water, dancing as if it were alive. It is short, and tells us how this beautiful spring originated.

"Long ago, before the face of a white man was seen, or known to exist, a great race of Indians, (of whom the Shoshones are all that now remain,) inhabited this lonely region. Then these valleys were filled with all kinds of game; and the hunters had nothing to do but to go a little distance from their encampment, when they would find buffaloes, deer, bears, elks, and mountain sheep, all of which could be obtained with but little trouble; for that was in the time when the Great Spirit loved his red children, and gave them all they could desire, because they were good, and sacrificed a white dog every full moon. Thus they lived, from year to year, happy and at peace with all their neighbors.

"But this could not always last. A dark cloud came across their sun, and the face of their great Manitou was turned away. He became angry with them, and the bears, and deer, and other animals, were turned away from the arrows of the young hunters, and they all returned silent and sad to their empty lodges. Sacrifices were offered to appease the evil spirit, but nothing would turn away the Manitou's anger from his children.

"Wah-na-lagua was the chief, and he fasted for six days, that the will of the Great Spirit might speak in his dreams, so that he could find a way to restore happiness to his people. On the sixth night, he dreamed a white fawn came to his lodge, and brought a bow and quiver of arrows in his mouth, and laying them at his feet, motioned for him to follow. Now, Wah-na-lagua had an only daughter, as beautiful as an antelope, and he loved her as she deserved to be loved. He dressed her in the finest doeskin, as soft and as flexible as the grass that moves under the summer wind; and he hung round her neck a priceless necklace of eagle-claws; on her arms were bracelets of yellow gold, and from her ears depended beautiful earlets of white shell, interlaced with red and yellow stones. The whole tribe loved her, and called her the White Fawn, because her dress of doeskin was as white as the mountain snow. The

young braves, when going to the chase, always passed by the old chief's lodge, that the glances of the White Fawn might tip their arrows with lightning, and make them fatal to the bear and panther; and when they returned from the mountains, laden with spoil, the choicest portions were left at the lodge of Wah-na-lagua, for the sake of his beautiful daughter.

"Wah-na-lagua rose from his bed of skins when the morning was come, and thought over his dream. The Great Spirit had spoken to him, and he felt certain that plenty would again smile in all their villages. While he was yet thinking, his daughter came in, and in her hands were the strong ashen bow, wrapped with deer-sinews, and the fire-hardened arrows of her father.

"'Father, the Great Spirit has spoken to me,' she said, as she laid his bow and arrows at his feet; 'but you must tell no one, or his face will be again turned away from his children. You must tell no one what you shall see or hear in the place I was told to lead you; for the voice whispered in my ear that the day you opened your mouth to speak forbidden things, that day your joy would be turned to sorrow, and evil would forever settle on your lodge. Come, follow me; and the Great Spirit will again make our people glad!'

"The chief picked up his bow and arrows, and followed after his child. It was to a lonely meadow, in a deep glen, far within the mountains, that she led him. The shades of night had not yet passed upward from that deep spot, when, on a sign from her, they both stopped. Wah-na-lagua knew the place; it was the burial-ground of the chiefs of a tribe that existed before his fathers saw the sun. They were standing at the foot of the pyramid of earth that marked their resting-place; but, what was his astonishment to see a large opening in the side of the mound! White Fawn motioned him to enter, and then turned on her homeward path.

"The heart of the chief was brave, but it trembled when he entered into the cold home of the buried dead. He had not gone far when he saw a brilliant light, as if coming from the noonday sun. This strengthened his heart. On a sudden, he found himself looking out upon a beautiful land, where were trees bending with golden fruits, and streams swarming with silvery fishes; but that which gladdened his eyes were the numberless herds of buffaloes, feeding on wide, extensive plains and thousands of deer, antelopes, and all other kinds of game, reaping and playing in the soft sunshine. Wah-na-lagua felt he was in the hunting-ground of the spirit-land, and his soul swelled with thankfulness to the Great Spirit, who had permitted him, when living, to see the happiness prepared for the good in another world.

"A troop of horses came galloping along, their skins as glossy as the silk on the milky maize, and their long tails flowing in the wind. One of them, as white as the glistening snow, stop-

ped before him, and with eyes that spoke like tongues, told him to come and mount. The chief sprung upon his back, and off he darted as fleet as the wind, bearing him out upon the plain, and right in the thickest of the herd of buffaloes. Wah-na-lagua's arrows were as quick and fatal as the lightning; and when all were gone, he found a whole heap of the fattest cows lying dead upon the grass.

"His beautiful steed then galloped away, and left him right at the entrance of the passage or vault whereby he had entered. The chief, with many a fond, lingering look, turned his back upon the beautiful land, and forced his way through darkness to his own colder world. When he again emerged from the side of the tumulus, and stood in the little meadow, he there found all the game he had slaughtered, having been carried out before him by some invisible hands.

"Wah-na-lagua returned, wondering and thankful, to his lodge. His people had not seen him go out; but, as soon as they got sight of his happy face, they knew he had good news for his starving children. They all came crowding round, and when he told them to take all their horses and load them with the good fat meat that the Great Spirit had given them, they shouted and danced for joy. There was feasting that day in every lodge, for every one was provided with plenty, and they all thanked the Great Spirit, that he had given them so good and brave a chief.

"When this supply was done, Wah-na-lagua and his daughter went again to the hill of the spirit-land. The old chief entered, and found his white horse waiting. Again were his deadly arrows sent among the fleeing game. His young men were waiting for his return, and as soon as they saw his glad-some face, they hurried to the lonely glen, and returned laden with the fattest meat. While Wah-na-lagua observed the strictest silence as to how and where his supplies were obtained, every thing prospered. But evil tongues were busy among some of his braves, and they taunted him for his silence, saying:

"Show us the place where you kill so many buffaloes and deer, that we may also hunt. Our chief has leagued with the evil Manitou; he wishes to destroy us; his deeds must be evil, or why should he shun the light?"

"These, at last, worked so much upon Wah-na-lagua, that, in a moment of forgetfulness, he uttered what White Fawn had so often told him to conceal.

"The next time the chief and his daughter went to the spirit-mound, a body of his braves lay hid in the dense woods to watch, and if need be, to enter into the earth after him. The White Fawn walked ahead of her father, silent and thoughtful. She knew the secret had been told, and she dreaded the coming evil that had been threatened. When they came to the little hill, they found it opened as before; but this time White

Fawn was impelled onward by some invisible power until her form was lost in the darkness of that lonely path, when the sides of the mound came suddenly together, inclosing her forever from the sight of her now woeeful father. With sorrowings and lamentations the braves bore the swooning body of their chief back to his village. The young men and maidens mourned her for many a day. Wah-na-lagua became as a shadow—he would eat nothing, and at last he died, calling on his child.

“Several moons after, a fountain of water was discovered on the top of the mound that concealed the body of the White Fawn. And the Indians say, that in the full moon her form can be seen sitting on the water, which sparkles beneath her like silver stars. Some say that she is still alive, and that the tears she sheds in her dark prison, spring up and form this beautiful fountain, which ever has a sad and melancholy sound, like a complaining soul. And this is the legend of the boiling spring, or white fountain.”

CHAPTER VIII.

A HUNT IN THE MOUNTAINS.

WHEN Norwood and his companion left the boiling spring on their way homeward, the morning sun had ascended some distance on his course, and was now looking over the mountains and into that lonely glen, dispelling the shadows, and shooting his beams like long, golden arrows through the dark pines and cedars. Rose was now all life; with her small, soft hand clasped in Norwood's, she walked alongside, telling him of a thousand things—of her hopes—her joys—and how she clambered up the lone, wild mountains after her wandering goats—and of the beautiful flowers she gathered in the valleys—and of the birds that sung in the springtime and built their nests in the mountain ash beside her little hut—and then her voice changed to a lower tone as she spoke of the voices heard at night amid the forest—and the unearthly sounds among the mountains when the storm-cloud enveloped them from sight. Her whole being was but the reflex of nature in all her beautiful varieties of sights and sounds; and Norwood—too happy in having such an instructor—walked along as if his soul had but now caught a glimpse of the deep joys of life. Certain it was that things had never before worn such looks, so full of mystery. The tall pines and branching cedars seemed whispering sweet words; and the running stream a living creature, clapping its hands and singing on its way. Her words seemed to have opened to him a joy unfelt before; and unconsciously his eyes looked with hers into the deep vail of nature, and there read of things that to the diviner sense alone have a meaning and a language.

Their path now led them through a deep, wild gorge: on both sides was a wall of solid rock rising perpendicularly to a great height, and crowned with a few straggling, blasted cedars whose long, white branches stretched over the chasm; and penciled on the clear, blue sky, seemed like the skinny arms of anchorites threatening a wicked world. Through this chasm flowed a wild torrent—at one moment dashing over some shelving fall and breaking into frothy foam against the breasting rocks; again, curling round and round behind the shelter of the projecting bank, forming deep and quiet pools; and then, like a quick spirit tired of its ease, starting into the wild current, and going with many a leap and bound on its rough and destined course.

This wild gorge soon opened into a basin of considerable extent, surrounded on every side by bleak, grim mountains, whose bases alone were decorated with the pine and cedar. In the center of this basin was a wide, extended meadow, through which the torrent above mentioned flowed as calmly and as silently as if it had not before been dashing and foaming down its rocky channel, delighting in noise and contention. The meadow was covered with long, wild grass now changing to the golden tinge of autumn. Surrounding it was a dark fence of cedar mixed with the ash, whose yellow leaves now formed a delightful contrast with the deep green of its neighboring trees. In the midst of this meadow, and embosomed in a small grove of ash and cedar, was the residence of Sib.

It was a rude and badly-fashioned hut, composed of four posts sunk in the ground, that were joined to each other by a few ashen poles—these supporting a number of long pieces of bark standing upright and surrounding the whole frame-work of the cabin; this layer of bark was plastered on the outside with a thick coat of clay, which formed a warm but not very durable wall to this rude abode. The roof was made of raw buffalo-skins stretched over a thick layer of rough and knotty poles. And for a door were suspended a couple of skins, forming a flap to a narrow opening in the side of the cabin, fronting the stream. The interior was divided off by a low hanging of deer-skins running across the far corner of the hut; this little recess belonged entirely to Rose, where was her couch of the glossy hides of the white and gray bear, and a few articles of dress hanging amid bunches of dried flowers from deer-antlers fastened in the wall. The outer apartment was strung round with the evidences of a trapper's life. Traps, ropes, beaver-skins, a couple of buffalo-lances, several bows and quivers of arrows, and many dried-up scalps—spoils taken in battle—were hung all around the bark wall, with an entire disregard to arrangement. A large pile of buffalo and other skins were lying in one corner; in another were stowed several hams of dried venison, and long, thin slices of smoked buffalo. Immediately

beside the entrance were a number of rifles standing against the wall—which was a fair evidence that Sib had many visitors not far off. This, however, might be at once known from the noisy talking going on outside—from which the listener might easily infer that some grand consultation was being held, of vital interest to the party.

It was Sib himself, who, with Fritz, the Doctor, the Captain, and 'Ziah, were sitting on the ground around a large fire, and talking of the day in the mountains, hunting. The fire was built near to the hut, under the spreading branches of a tall pine that formed a fine shade for the consulting hunters. Around were scattered pots, pans, and all the other cooking utensils that could make life sweet—at least to more than the Doctor. The party was in the deepest of their consultation when Norwood and his young companion, Rose, were descried emerging from the dark fringe of woods and crossing the meadow.

"There he comes!" cried the Doctor; "there the dreamer comes—as somebody says in the play! But I don't believe he will want to be one of our party; he has lost nearly all his daring in the chase; and now he would rather be looking at the moon, or rambling with our little fairy through the mountains, and looking as if for something he had lost. I tell you what it is, I don't believe wild meat agrees with him!"

"Not as well as it does with you, Doctor!" laughed Fritz. "You talk of Mr. Norwood rambling among the mountains, but I would like to know who goes so often through the glens and narrow valleys, and over and among the rocks, with a long leather bag across his shoulder, picking up weeds and stones, and calling them some barbarous, unchristianlike names? Mr. Norwood don't do this!"

"No, sir!" said the Doctor; "Charley Norwood is not traveling for the same purpose that I am, and of course he is not required to act like me. I am out for the purposes of science, and I must suffer much, not only in limbs, but also in mind, from the ignorance of those who ought to know better!"

"Yes," chimed in 'Ziah, with his drawling manner. "I kin sartinly say from experience, that the Doctor is often put into sad perdicaments. I see'd him wunce in a most dangerous position with an old buffaler-bull—"

"No more of that, 'Ziah!" said the Doctor, hastily interrupting him. "You know that was an experiment that every one don't understand; so don't mention it!"

"Well, Captain!" he continued, wishing to change the conversation, "how do you get along with your journal? Any more insinuations against the Yankees? I expect that you will immortalize us all when you return to your own country. But take care and don't mix any lies with what facts you may have been able to collect on your tour! I suppose, however, it will be another Maryatt affair?"

"Come, Doctor," replied the Captain, "I don't want to commence quarreling with you at the present time; but one thing I must say, I will vouch for the truth of every word contained in my book! and that is more than you can say for every word that comes out of your mouth!"

"I declare you're very modest, very!" replied the Doctor, in some heat. "You say you don't want to quarrel, and yet you begin by insinuations—yes, sir! insinuations against my character for veracity. However, you're one of the John Bull family, and that accounts for the many *beastly* notions you entertain!"

"Yes, sir!" he continued, seeing that his retort had nettled the Captain, "you may thank yourself for every thing you receive in the way of hard words! If you talk like a gentleman, you will be treated as a gentleman!"

"Come! come!" said Sib, now seeing that both belligerents were becoming warm, "it's a shame that l'arned men can't agree! I would like to know what's to become of *us*, if you wise folks can't keep your tempers and talk sensibly together?"

"I tell you," said the Captain, springing to his feet, "I won't suffer that lubberly thing, that calls himself a doctor, to trample upon me. I wasn't made to be trampled upon by any such Yankee—"

"No insinuations ag'in' the Yankees," drawled 'Ziah, as he turned his church-going face toward the irritated Captain. "Talk as you like about the Doctor as a man, but say nothing ag'in' the Yankees, if you have any respect for *my* feelin's!"

"Now, fellers!" exclaimed Sib, "I want you all to know that I'm king here; and I won't have any quar'ling as long as I'm about. You're all my guests, and as long as you stay with me you shall all be treated alike. But mind, no fightin' among friends, or I'll interfere; and I might be compelled to hurt some o' your feelin's!"

This address of old Sib's had a meaning that quieted both parties for the present. These quarrels, however frequent, were soon made up; for the Doctor, though a little choleric, was at heart one of the best-natured fellows living—and was always the first to extend the hand of fellowship to the moroser Captain; who, however much his dignity were insulted, would not be able to withstand the Doctor's advances of reconciliation—especially when backed by a glass of old Monongahela, which the Doctor invariably offered as a token of forgetfulness—and in which all strife and contention were soon buried. In the present instance, after fuming for a few minutes, the two were seen to withdraw to the shade of a neighboring tree where was stowed the Doctor's kit; and from sundry upturnings of each other's heads—as if gazing at something in the overhanging branches—one might easily infer that they were drinking their accustomed potion to friendship as restored.

Good-humor being again restored between the two worthies, and Norwood now coming up, their whole plans for spending the remainder of the day in the mountains were laid before him; but our hero, as the Doctor had imagined, said he would much rather remain at the cabin, to keep Rose company; and that Pasqual, Dutch and himself would have a rousing fire burning, and supper prepared by the time of their return. Besides, he said it might be dangerous for them all to go away and leave their animals in the meadow, under the weak guardianship of Dutch and Pasqual, for some roving band of Navajos might come along and drive them off.

"No fear of that," said Sib; "I have lived here five years, and none of the Navajos ever disturbed me; for though many of them have visited this spot, they were always very friendly and never offered me any injury. I have no fear of them; and I have never knowed the Arapahoes to come in this way, till that time they carried off my little Rose of the mountains. Oh, no, there's no fear of Injins; don't let that keep you at home; and as to Rose, why, she's often staid alone for weeks at a time, when I went to Santa Fe, and never felt lonely. But, hows'ever, if you'd rather stay at home, we've nothin' more to say; every one, you know, must suit himself."

Norwood did not ask for more excitement; his whole journey hitherto had been one of a stirring nature, and he wished now for a little relaxation; besides, he wanted, in company with Rose, to visit a quiet little valley, a short distance off, that she had often described to him, and which, in her eyes, was the very Paradise of places. He therefore excused himself from the proposed expedition, and the rest departed without him, sending back many a wild halloo, as long as they were within sight of the hut.

Our party of hunters, guided by old Sib, were in great spirits. The day was cool and pleasant, and the Doctor declared he could travel as far, and clamber over as many rocks, as the best of them, though they had not half the load to carry. Heat and hunger were the only two things that rendered him incapable of any exertion, as he said himself. But now he had his belly full of the choicest viands old Sib's larder could afford, and then the sun, though near the meridian, was not pouring forth such streams of fire as he did when on the prairies, his rigor being cooled by the advancing autumn; and the Doctor now marched along with his rifle on his shoulder, with as much ease and buoyancy as Fritz himself.

After traveling for half an hour, they found themselves at the base of a rugged-looking mountain, whose face was thick with immense masses of dark rocks, interspersed with bushes of dwarf-pine and cedar. Sib led the way up through this wild mixture of green and brown. The ascent was very toilsome, leading over huge piles of detached rocks, and then through

the thick and low branches of a cedar grove, where the eye could not see an arm's length ahead; at one time descending into some deep gully, with which the whole face of the mountain seemed scored; at another, clambering up the almost perpendicular side of some barren bluff, which was again crowned with the everlasting scrub-pines and cedars. Thus it continued, until even the Doctor's good-nature began to ebb out in muttered ejaculations, about the toil of traveling, for the questionable delight of shooting something.

At last, however, they emerged from this "orful wilderness," as 'Ziah termed it, and found themselves on a level terrace or plateau running round the whole side of the mountain. Turning to the right, they went along quietly and cautiously, for Sib said they were now among the pastures of the Big Horns, and might expect to see a flock of them at every step.

After passing along the face of the mountain, the terrace they were on opened out to a considerable extent, and now formed a kind of valley, running between the mountain they had ascended and another much higher, whose summit appeared to be but one mass of solid rock, rising to the height of four or five hundred feet above their present elevation. Traveling along this valley for a few minutes, the mountain on their right seemed to be parted in its center, through which ran a deep defile or gorge, on a level with and leading at right angles from the spot on which they were. Entering this narrow passage, which was almost choked up with fallen masses of rock, our party soon found themselves in the midst of a number of defiles, running in all directions, and cutting the mountain into a hundred isolated peaks. Some of these defiles were of considerable width, and many of them filled with a thick growth of dwarf cedar.

As yet, no game had been observed. Sib here ordered a halt, for the purpose of making arrangements as to their future course. It was finally agreed that the party should be divided—Sib and the Doctor taking down one of the defiles, while the rest followed another running in the same direction; both parties to meet at a certain point designated. The Captain, who was under the guidance of Fritz, soon began to get tired; and as they would all be compelled to retrace their steps when on their way home, he concluded he would stop and rest awhile, and then leisurely return to their place of divergence, to await the return of his companions. Telling Fritz and 'Ziah of his intention, he seated himself upon a detached piece of rock, in order to rest for a while.

The place in which he was was surrounded by a dense growth of pine and cedar, in the dark shade of which his two friends were soon lost sight of. The Captain remained in the same position for a long time after they left. His rifle leaned against the rock on which he sat; his thoughts were far away—no doubt with his distant friends and family, beyond the dark-blue ocean.

He had remained thus a long time, when he became aware that something was moving through the bushes, as if coming toward him. He at first scarcely paid any attention to the noise, as it was in the direction his companions had taken, and he thought it might be caused by one of them on his homeward return. But soon, all his attention was absorbed by the increasing noise, which now seemed as if some large animal were struggling through the low branches of the wood—breaking and crushing them at every step. The Captain seized his rifle, and waited anxiously for the appearance of the animal; and he had not long to wait; for there, not six paces distant, a huge grizzly bear emerged from the thicket, and appeared coming directly toward the rock on which the Captain was still sitting. The Captain was indeed startled to find himself in such dangerous proximity to an animal of whose ferocity he had heard so many wonderful stories; however, there was no time to be lost in considering what to do, for the bear was fast approaching, though as yet he had not observed the obstruction in his path, but came along with his snout to the ground, as if looking for berries among the fallen leaves. Bringing his rifle to his shoulder, the Captain took a sure aim, and fired full on the front of the huge animal; but the ball only penetrated the skin, and fell flattened from the iron skull of the bear. Scarcely stopping to see the effect of his fire, the Captain started off at a run, in the hope of hiding himself among the bushes and rocks, until such time as he thought his enemy would either lay down and die, or move off in some other direction. But Bruin was not to be eluded so easily. Shaking his head a few times, as he felt the sudden concussion from the bullet, he darted after the Captain, whose active little body was just vanishing among the cedars.

The Captain, now hearing the enemy tearing through the low bushes in his rear, redoubled his speed, turning and winding in all directions through the woods, in the hope of putting Mr. Bruin off the trail. But though he wound among rocks and bushes, he could still hear the pertinacious animal following behind, and occasionally caught a glimpse of his gray hide among the dark green of the low cedar branches. It was a regular game of hide and seek; and when the Captain would imagine himself securely hidden behind some pile of rocks, or in some dark clump of bushes, he would suddenly be routed by seeing the muzzle of his pursuer in close proximity with his own. The Captain began to despair of being able to escape from his persevering enemy; he was very much fatigued with his strenuous exertions, and do what he would, he could not find time to reload his rifle, which he had hitherto carried with him. But now, the bushes became much thinner, giving the bear a decided advantage, and to lighten himself, in order to increase his speed, he was compelled to cast away his rifle. Turning up the mountain-side, where the rocks lay scattered, in thick and

heavy masses, he hoped to clamber up into some inaccessible place, where the bear would not be able to follow. This thought gave renewed energy to his tired limbs, and for a while he succeeded in gaining a decided advantage over his pursuer, who, now that the Englishman was in full sight, lumbered along apparently without much exertion, as if certain of his prey.

But there is a barrier to all human exertion; and our friend, the Captain, soon found one to his further progress, in the shape of a high rock, whose smooth side it was in vain to attempt scaling. On either hand, the rocks stood high and thick, forming a complete trap, in which the Captain was caught; for all retreat was now cut off, by the bear appearing only a few yards distant, and blocking up the narrow path by which he had entered.

"Curse the brute!" yelled the Captain, as he turned with a horrified look to face his pursuer. "Damn him for a regular man-eater, I say! I wonder if some of my companions ain't about."

So saying, the Captain uttered a couple of the most startling yells, in order to give notice to his friends, if any were within call, that he was in a mighty bad predicament. The huge brute was fast approaching—his whole front crimsoned with the blood from the wound made by the bullet from the Captain's rifle. The Englishman now felt his fate as fixed. He had nothing but a knife wherewith to defend himself—but which, even in more powerful and cooler hands, would be next to nothing against such a ferocious adversary.

The Captain had made up his mind to die nobly; but as his eye took in the immense size and strength of the animal, and saw his shaggy hide all spattered with blood, his courage entirely vanished. Letting his knife drop he turned his face toward the rocky barrier, with the vain hope of attempting to scale it; but that would have been a useless attempt. The bear was now almost upon him. Giving a yell of despairing agony, he threw himself upon the ground, in utter hopelessness of escape; but this action proved his salvation; for as he fell, his eye happened to catch the appearance of a long, narrow opening or recess, under the rock right before him. Darting toward it with convulsive energy, he managed to crawl in just as the bear reached his hiding-place.

This recess, so providentially discovered, extended but a short distance into the rock; it gave him ample room for stretching himself at full length; but it was so low that it was with a tight squeeze he managed to edge his body to the furthest point. Bruin was no doubt astonished when he saw his prey vanish so suddenly, as if into the solid rock. Pausing a moment on the spot where the Captain had been last seen, as if to listen for some noise to direct his search, he lowered his muzzle, and began smelling along under the projecting rock. The Cap-

tain scarcely dared to breathe; he had hopes of escaping the notice of his vicious enemy, but in this he was soon undeceived; for Bruin scented him out with the same fidelity a dog would a ground-hog; and now thrust his long, bloody nose under the rock, and after a snuff or two to satisfy himself, withdrew his snout, and then very leisurely introduced one of his fore-paws, to pull his prey out of his hiding-place. The Captain, upon seeing this huge paw so unceremoniously thrust toward him, hugged the far end of the rock with a convulsive energy. The long claws of the bear came within an inch of his body—near enough to cause a cold thrill to pass through every fiber of his person. The Captain breathed a little freer when that unwelcome *feeler* was withdrawn. But Bruin was not yet satisfied. Thrusting as much of his head as he could get into the narrow opening, he took what might be called a knowing squint at the trembling Englishman. Appearing satisfied with his observation, his huge paw was again introduced; but this time his claws grasped the tail of the Captain's hunting-shirt, and almost instantaneously the luckless Englishman found himself sliding along in its wake, full upon the expecting beast. The Captain's fingers scraped along the rock, catching with convulsive energy at every indentation that might stop his further progress to the open air, where a horrid fate awaited him. At last he succeeded in bracing himself with one hand against a projection of the rock above; and then came the tug. The coat was of buckskin, and consequently of great strength and durability; and being fastened round the body by a belt, was not to be torn away without a tremendous exertion of strength. The bear, finding himself thus brought to a sudden stop, was too old a one to continue pulling, when his hold was only in the *tail*, and not in the body of his game. Thrusting his big muzzle under the rock to see how matters were, he saw the pallid face of the Captain within a foot of his own. Giving a snuff or two, expressive of his satisfaction, his head was withdrawn, and he then endeavored to introduce his other paw, to take a fresh hold; but owing to the projection of the rock, he could not succeed in accomplishing his purpose. The Captain, in the mean time, had presence of mind to loosen the buckle of his belt with his left hand, which was partially at liberty, and untie the strings that confined his hunting-shirt round his breast and neck; and then, when the bear had withdrawn his second paw, with a quick maneuver, succeeded in rolling his body backward, at the same time withdrawing his arms from the sleeves; and when Bruin gave another pull, the hunting-shirt came away; but there was nothing in it; his game had edged himself back to his old position.

Not in the least daunted by his ill-luck, (after venting his rage upon the ill-fated garment, which was soon torn into a thousand shreds) Mr. Bruin commenced his old game of *poker*; but

the Captain had squeezed himself into the least circumference possible, and the long claws of the bear, though scraping his body in several places, were unable to get a sufficient hold to pull him forth. The bear worked away with the most commendable perseverance, first thrusting in one paw; and after scraping the Captain's ribs for a few minutes, withdrew it, and introduced the other with like effect. The Captain stood the poking manfully; and though his whole body was squeezed up, as if part and parcel of the rock behind him, still he had lungs enough to curse and groan at a wonderful rate. But observing at last that this seemed to spur on the bear to more strenuous exertions, he was forced to choke his feelings, which, however, would burst out occasionally into a yell of agony, at a more successful poke, when his enemy would succeed in rattling his claws against his now lacerated ribs.

Hour after hour passed away, and still the brute, with but an occasional intermission, for the purpose of resting, kept poking and smelling with as great a zest as ever. The Captain was nearly exhausted. He had hoped that when evening approached his persecutor would travel off and leave him; but now, from the increasing gloom without, he felt certain that the sun had set, and still the bear appeared to have no notion of departure.

"Ah!" sighed the Captain, "if I am compelled to stay here all night, I will be a gone goose before morning! Human nature can not live in this position!"

His melancholy thoughts were, however, interrupted by the sharp report of a couple of rifles, followed by the sudden disappearance of his enemy. He was rescued. He heard talking outside, and soon the long, solemn face of 'Ziah was seen, instead of the bear's, peering into the darkness.

"Hyar he is!" shouted 'Ziah to some one without; "holed as sure as a skunk! Come out, Capting, come out; the b'ar's done for, sure enough. Hyar, take hold of my gun; I'll pull you out!"

The Captain, with this assistance, was soon in the open air, and freed from his rocky prison. Old Sib was also there, but now appeared to be intently engaged skinning the dead carcass of the bear, which lay a few feet from the mouth of the "Capting's hole," as 'Ziah termed it.

It was a long time before the Captain was sufficiently restored to commence his journey homeward. Old Sib, with 'Ziah's assistance, had taken the shaggy hide off the body of the brute, which the Captain determined to preserve as a memorial of his first bear-hunt in the mountains. When they started homeward it was quite dark, and then the Captain first learned how his friends had found him out. 'Ziah had by chance come across his rifle, as he was returning from his hunt; and examining further, found, from the marks only known to a trapper's eye,

that he had been pursued by a bear. Calling to Sib, who now hove in sight, the two, after a great deal of difficulty, succeeded in following up the trail, until they fortunately relieved him. It was a narrow escape; and for the future, no temptation, however great, could induce the Captain to hunt grizzly bears in the Rocky Mountains.

CHAPTER IX.

SHADOWS OF THE FUTURE.

Two weeks passed away and our party were still at old Sib's. The time was mostly spent in hunting amid the mountains; and Sib's larder had never before been so well stocked with bear-meat, venison, and other wild game. It was a happy time for all. The Doctor had increased his collection with many strange and valuable plants; and then, too, he had laid in a store of dried venison hams to eat on his journey to Santa Fe. The only drawback to his happiness was, that his liquor did not stand exposure as well as himself—being now entirely gone; for latterly he had been very generous in its disposal; and every night, when supper was over, and the party would circle round the huge pine fire, to listen to the entertaining stories of old Sib, he would fill a flask and send it round in the pauses of the story, not only to give Sib a greater fluency in speech, but also to inspire the audience with a fit spirit for listening. However, as long as he had plenty of fat bear-meat and venison to feed upon, it was no great loss; and though at night he would miss his favorite flask, still, he consoled himself by the anticipation of laying in another supply as soon as he arrived at Santa Fe.

The Captain, since his unfortunate bear-hunt, stuck close to camp; no inducement could prevail upon him to join any more hunting-parties. Besides, his ribs had not yet recovered from the scraping they received from the bear's claws; and they seemed to pain afresh whenever he happened to pass by the place where Sib had stretched the hide of his enemy, for the purpose of drying it. That sight always made him think of the poking he received when under the rocks; and this thought would for a moment bring back all he felt and suffered. His time had been mostly passed in writing long disquisitions in his journal about mountain life—its delights and perils; and then followed a most graphic description of the grizzly bear—its habits, strength, and immense size, and the ferocity it displays when attacked by hunters.

'Ziah, Fritz and Sib were almost continually amid the mountains, hunting—laying up a store of meat to keep Sib through the coming winter, that could already be felt approaching in

the cold, frosty nights, and the rude growling of the wind among the dark-green cedars.

Norwood had passed most of his time in company with Rose, wandering up some of the lonely valleys, or climbing up the rough mountain's side to see the sun rise and set. Rose was never happy but when with him; and as the time drew near in which he was to bid her good-by, she appeared to attach herself to him still more than ever, and would never leave him; but in walking or sitting would remain with her small hand clasped in his, as if by that mute action she would detain him from his intended departure. And Norwood himself had taken so much delight in her company, that he felt it would require a considerable exertion to depart with the probability of never seeing her again. He had spoken to Sib several times about the possibility of hunting up her parents, if yet living, but he could give him no clue whatever to assist him in his search. And when he hinted the advantages that she would have if brought into civilized life, and that he would, by every means in his power, attempt to make her situation happy, it brought so much pain to the old man's heart that he did not dare to press it. Sib had been as a father to the lost one; and though rough and rude to almost every one else, to her he was all gentleness, all affection. His whole life appeared to be devoted to her; and Norwood felt that it would be cruel even to think of taking her away.

But notwithstanding all this, he was determined, in his journey down the Rio del Norte, to make all the inquiries possible, in hopes of hearing something of her parents; and if unsuccessful, he would be compelled to return home and leave her like a wild rose in the wilderness, blooming in solitude and "wasting its fragrance on the desert air." It must be confessed that this last thought was a sad one. She had so won upon his feelings, that, unconsciously, in all his dreams of the future, her sweet face was one of those bright hopes that hover round the present, casting ahead a portion of their rays to designate the path that leads through gloom and darkness to the dread unknown. He had been careful not to mention any of his plans to Rose, for well he knew it would be feeding her mind upon hopes that might never be realized; and if unsuccessful, he would never forgive himself for the pain she would suffer. Rose had been the life and light of the whole company; her joyous smile and happy look; had even won over 'Ziah; so that, when in her company the usual solemnity of his countenance relaxed, and a pleasant emotion could be distinguished stealing over his face, like a gleam of sunshine over the surface of a deep, dark lake. All felt happier when in her presence; for her countenance, like the sun, lighted every thing it looked upon, diffusing a portion of its own joy upon the darker spirits of those around.

Yet now she felt unhappy. From many little preparations,

she knew that Norwood and his party would soon depart; and the thought of her consequent loneliness gave a melancholy tinge to every thing she looked upon. He, who had been so kind—who had told of things of whose existence she had never dreamed—who had been her companion in many a lonely ramble—whose presence had been like the dawn of a new life, was now about to leave her, and perhaps forever. It was like taking the light from her eyes; for every thing heretofore so joyous, seemed to be steeped in the shadows of a rayless night. From him she had learned so much; and now the voice that had opened her mind to such a joyous world was to be lost—to be heard no more. This was a sad, sad thought; and sometimes, when all around would be buried in sleep, her light form would be seen stealing through the meadow, and hurrying to the lone, sequestered fountain, and there, with nothing but the bright stars as watchers, mingle her tears with the diamond drops of the leaping water.

One night, when she thought every one at rest, stealing from her couch, she wended her way to the deep, dark dell of the boiling spring, and seating herself in her accustomed place, beside the bubbling water, gave full vent to the saddened feelings within her. Long and bitterly did she weep; it was the first shadow that had crossed the sunlight of her love, and its gloom, in consequence, was the more intense. She was at last startled by a noise behind her; starting up in wild affright, she saw the form of a man near by; she would have fled, but then the low, soft voice of Norwood calling her name, reassured her.

"Rose, dear Rose, don't be alarmed," he continued, as he advanced toward where she stood on the margin of the spring; "I saw you leaving the hut, and imagining where you were going, I followed you; I would have spoken sooner, but I did not see you until I was ascending the mound."

At the sight of his well-known form, Rose sprung forward, and threw herself, weeping, into his arms.

"Why, Rose!" he exclaimed, "what is the matter with you?—why are you grieving so? Come, let us sit here, side by side, where we have sat so often, and tell me all your sorrows. You have never yet concealed any thing from me; and now, I know you will not refuse to share your griefs."

"Ah!" she began, with a fresh burst of tears, "you are going away—you are going to leave me. Though you did not tell me, I have long felt that you would go away;—and it will be so lonesome!"

"Rose, you should not grieve so much for my departure," replied Norwood, pressing her throbbing head to his bosom. "Even if I do go away, I hope it will not be long till I return, and then I may have something good to tell; and you will have so many things to narrate to me—of your dreams, your thoughts; and then the many new and wonderful places that

you will have found out during my absence, and which we will visit together. Yes, Rose, our meeting will be rendered much happier by our mutual anticipations; I will think of the many beautiful things you will have to show me, and you will gladden yourself by the thought of having, at least, a willing companion in your daily rambles amid the mountains. Why, we will have a glorious time; the very thought shall hasten my return, and then we will talk of nothing but our own happiness."

Rose remained silent for a few moments; then raising her head from its fond resting-place, she turned her tearful eyes upon Norwood, and replied in a low, sad tone:

"You talk of returning, and of the happy times we'll have when we have again met: but I feel that when you go, I will never see you more—never! Something tells me that there is some sad event about to happen, and I know it is this: that when you depart it will be never to return."

"Ah! Rose, don't think so," replied Norwood; "your imagination has pictured out too gloomy a foreboding. When the cold winter will have passed away, and the early spring flowers smile in the lonely valleys, then you may expect me; and I hope that my coming will be the symbol of some happy news. The winter is approaching fast, and it will not do to be caught in these mountains by the deep and driving snows."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Rose, "I would not have you stay, and yet—"

"And yet—what?" asked Norwood, seeing her pause, as if unwilling to proceed.

"I scarcely know what I was about to say," replied Rose, "I am so selfish—I know I am—I am always thinking of my own pleasure, and not of yours. No, no," she continued, tenderly taking his hand; "I will not ask you to stay. You must again go out into that beautiful world of which you have told me so much, and where are all those you love. There is nothing here like those splendid houses and happy people; and it would be wrong in me to wish for your delay. And yet, you will forgive me, won't you, if I sometimes grieve when thinking over the happy days we've spent together, and feel they will have no return? To you I am indebted for almost every thing I know. I feel I am yet a child; but you have made me think, and opened my eyes to the beauties that were before unnoticed. And now I will have no person to talk to me like you; none that can teach me the things that you have taught—none that will walk with me and listen to the wild voice in the winds at night—none that will listen to my Indian tales—none that will be my thought by day, my dream by night. Oh! it will be a sad—sad time!"

Norwood was deeply affected; he would have given any thing he possessed could he have taken this sad, lost child to his own home, and placed her within the power of those who

would love and cherish her as she deserved. But this could not be as long as Sib was in existence; his was an older, dearer claim; and he felt convinced that if Rose had her free will, and every inducement held out, she would never desert him who had indeed been as a father, and whose whole life appeared to be entwined with that of his adopted child.

Norwood's musings, which were now becoming painful, were at length interrupted by Rose, whose whole manner now seemed changed from that of wild and passionate grief to one of quiet melancholy.

"Do you believe in dreams?" she asked, in her low, sweet voice, while her eyes, in the clear starlight, gazed anxiously in his.

"Not altogether," replied Norwood; "they are a kind of liars, that sometimes speak the truth. But why do you ask such a question?"

"Because," said Rose, "I have had such strange dreams; and they all seemed to leave such a sad weight upon my waking thoughts. For several nights, I have seen those dark, mild eyes that memory links with my earliest years, and which must be my mother's; and they seemed to smile so sadly on me, as if longing, yet fearing, to come to me; and then, I have heard strange voices whispering beside me—all in my dreams; I think some great change is about to happen me. To-night, as I passed the wild mountain gorge, I fancied the tall cedars in the rocks were like the persons whose voices I had heard in my dreams, and they seemed to beckon with their long arms, as if they were waiting for me; and as I hurried through that dark wood, the wind, whose voices I have always loved, seemed moaning amid the pines, as if wailing for some lost favorite; and to-night, this fountain seems impressed with a melancholy sound, as if the White Fawn were weeping for her long imprisonment; and the water does not leap so high, nor are its drops so sparkling. Oh! there is a shadow upon every thing I see. Something is about to happen—and now, my spirit seems struggling within me, as if it wanted to be free—to become a part of the mysterious sounds that haunt me so at every step I take, and which seem so familiar when I sleep."

"Rose, it is time for us to go," said Norwood, wishing to interrupt her melancholy thoughts, and change them to something more light and joyful. "Come, let me wrap my zarape round you; the night is cold, and as we return home, I will tell you of so many things I had intended to have told you before this; and now, I will speak to you in a joyous manner; for what I will tell you shall be of a happy nature, and they will dispel this dark cloud from every thing that surrounds you."

The night had more than half passed by when Norwood and Rose left the boiling spring on their return to the hut. There was no moon, but the stars twinkled brightly in the clear, cold

sky. A low breeze faintly moved the long branches of the tall dark pines, and seemed to fill the woods with mysterious whisperings. Norwood's heart was heavy, yet he felt it his duty to speak words of comfort to his young companion: and for this purpose, he spoke in a light, careless tone of her sad forebodings, and pictured the joyous time they were to have, when spring, with all her budding promises, would return, and also bring him back to live their pleasant days again. And then, to win her attention, and to kindle new thoughts, he pointed to the stars, and told her of their magnitude, and of the order and harmony of their movements; and then, he spoke of the Divine Power by whom all these were made—who had given laws to the Universe—whose all-seeing eye not only regarded the movements of so many wheeling worlds, but also watched the actions of the tiniest insects—who lived in an eternity, and in whom every thing had life and being.

Rose was insensibly withdrawn from her own being in the contemplation of him whom Norwood so eloquently described. This was a theme that always awakened the deepest energies of her soul; and never did her mind drink in his words with a greater relish. As he proceeded in his discourse, her whole being seemed to change, and the thoughts and feelings that made her earthly seemed one by one to be severed, until the spiritual alone existed, and bore her toward the fruition of all her hopes—the development of all her whispering dreams.

They had now reached the edge of the meadow that like a sleeping lake surrounded its little island of trees, where stood old Sib's mountain hut. Every thing was still and shadowy. Norwood was still on his glorious theme, when, just as he was about stepping from the shadow of the woods, he saw the dark figure of a man crossing the meadow some little distance in advance. He stopped instantly, and pointed out the object to Rose; but her mind had been so far away, so sublimated from all earthly things, that it was some time ere her thoughts could follow the direction of her eyes. The person whose appearance had so startled Norwood seemed, by his movements, to shun all desire of observation; for he walked with his body bent forward, so as to appear but slightly above the tall grass with which the meadow was covered. Whoever it was, had apparently been lurking about the hut; and whatever his object, was now hurrying as if to get away as soon as possible. Though the person was now crossing the path, scarcely twenty yards off, still Norwood could not determine with certainty whether the prowler was an Indian or not.

"Hush!" said Rose, whose recollection now seemed to have returned, "I know him;" at the same time her voice sunk to the inmost whisper: "it is Jake—Jake Cone; his appearance is a forerunner of something bad—for I feel such a cold chill creeping over me. Let him pass," she continued, as she saw Nor-

wood preparing to dart forward to intercept him, "he might do some harm; and I would not like you to injure him; for he is the only son of him who has always been so kind to me. If any thing should happen Jake, the old man would grieve a good deal; for you know, however vicious, he is still his son; and a father's heart will always speak, no matter how depraved the child!"

The person whom Rose had thus easily distinguished in the dark, had now approached the woods, but at the distance of fifty yards or more to the left of where Norwood was standing. Raising himself erect, he paused a moment as if listening; appearing satisfied, he gave a low, peculiar whistle, which was immediately answered from the woods near by; the figures of four or five others were seen emerging from the shadow and joining him. The whole party then withdrew to the dark line of woods, where their forms could just be distinguished, crowding together as if in some earnest consultation. In a short time they again appeared in full view, when they divided—four of them cutting across the meadow in the direction of the hut, and the other two, keeping along the woods, passed within four or five yards of the place where Norwood and Rose were concealed; and crossing the narrow stream that was near by, kept on as if directing their steps toward the cavallada which was kept in a little meadow about half a mile distant.

Rose seemed in a moment to comprehend their intentions. The last party was to create a stampede among the horses and mules; and while Sib and the rest would have left the cabin and run to protect the frightened animals, the other party would make a dash upon the unguarded hut, and succeed in their intentions—and what these were, her heart easily told her. Jake had expressed himself too often—and now there seemed to be no escape if she should be discovered; and then she thought if they did not find her, their rage would prompt them to commit some terrible act upon her friends. For a while she knew not what to do; at one moment resolving to rush forward and discover herself, and at another, starting as if to hide herself among the many recesses of the mountains. Norwood saw her agitation, and readily divined its cause; but while he soothed her with hopeful words, he himself was at a loss what to do—whether to attempt to alarm his companions in the hut, or follow in the wake of the two who had passed him and frustrate their intention toward the animals; but at all hazards, he was resolved that Rose should not leave his side—not even for a moment.

CHAPTER X.

THE FINAL TRAGEDY.

WHILE Norwood was endeavoring to think in what manner it would be best for him to act, he was somewhat startled to see another figure start up from the bank of the stream on his right, and hurry along, as if watching the party who were now some distance on their way toward the hut. Rose darted forward, and before Norwood well knew that she had left, he saw her and the stranger converse a few moments, then darting back, she was at his side again in an instant; and whispering, "It's Fritz," took his hand and led him forward to where Fritz was standing.

"I'm glad to see you," said Fritz, when Norwood had joined him; "I knew you were somewhere in the woods, for I saw you leave the hut. I was on watch all night—I saw tracks in the mountains yesterday, and I fear Jake would be about after mischief. I watched him all the time he was prowling about the cabin, and followed him till he joined his other companions. We must manage to alarm our friends—I'm sorry you haven't your rifle; do you crawl along down the creek—its bank will hide your person—and when you git opposite the place where the cabin is, crawl on your hands and knees through the grass—wake up Sib and the rest. I'll go after these other devils; they mustn't be permitted to take our animals. Be quick!—them devils will take hair if they git a chance! Take Rose with you—be off, and don't lose a moment!"

When Fritz had said this, he leaped the stream and disappeared in the woods.

Norwood did not lose an instant. Rose was even quicker than he, for she kept ahead, and noiselessly guided him down along the windings of the stream, whose bank, with a little care, would hide them effectually from all observation. In five minutes they had arrived at the little path that led from the water up to the hut. Looking cautiously over the bank, Norwood could see no object moving through the meadow. The trees that sheltered Sib's lonely abode stood but a little distance from the stream, but the intervening space was thinly covered with short grass that offered but little concealment if any one was on the look-out. Rose did not delay a moment; she threw herself flat upon the ground, and crawled along quickly yet cautiously toward the hut. Norwood followed her; he was assured that by this time the desperadoes had gained the shelter of the trees, and were now awaiting the signal from their two companions. By eyes like theirs, any object, however small, would be easily

distinguished; and then, the first notice he received would be the quick ball from their unerring rifles. This thought made him act cautiously; but at the same time every moment's delay might be of vast consequence to his friends, who seemed sleeping, so unconscious of any danger.

They had now arrived within a little distance of the hut; every thing was yet quiet. Rose paused, and whispered to Norwood; at the same time pointing to the shadow of the nearest tree; her quick eye had detected the appearance of a man behind the trunk. The tree stood five or six yards from the hut, a little to one side; and Norwood saw it would be impossible to proceed much further without being discovered. He was undecided what to do; but Rose whispered to him to remain quiet—she would find means of apprising Sib of danger. But scarcely had she spoken, when a solitary shot rung loud and sharp upon the night air in the direction of their animals. Its echoes were yet bounding among the mountains, when the skins that formed the door of the cabin were raised, and some one appeared as if to step into the open air; at the same moment a low, quick, chirruping sound from Rose made him step back hastily; it was Sib, who, upon hearing the shot, was alarmed, and was about going forth, when the well-known warning from Rose made him pause. The warning was also heard by more than Sib; for the person whom Rose had distinguished in the shadow of the tree now came forward as if to see whence the sound proceeded. Rose knew they were discovered; telling Norwood to follow, she rose to her feet and bounded forward toward the door of the hut. But the unknown was too quick; anticipating her intention, he had darted between her and the place of refuge, and Rose found herself rudely clasped in the arms of Jake Cone! Giving a scream, she attempted to break away, but she was held tightly.

Norwood now dashed forward and caught the villain by the throat; at the same time bending him backward to the earth, he endeavored to free Rose from his grasp; but he held her with a tight hand. Norwood was now seized in turn by another person, and forced to let go his hold. His assailant was a powerful fellow, and having the advantage, hurled him to the earth, where, pinning him with one hand, he endeavored to draw his knife with the other. But his advantage was of short duration. A rifle was fired from the door of the hut, only a few paces distant, and Norwood felt his enemy drop heavily upon his breast; he was dead. Throwing the quivering body to one side, he sprung to his feet, and saw the other about moving off with Rose in his arms. Springing forward to free Rose, a rifle was fired from behind a neighboring tree, and the ball went whizzing by his ear; but this did not daunt him. Catching Rose with one hand, he struck her abductor a violent blow in the face with the other; at the same time he heard

the well-known voice of 'Ziah immediately behind him, shouting:

"Give it to them! give the Injuns no quarter!—Iyar's at them!"

Norwood was now in the utmost danger, for his opponent was striking at him with his knife, though still holding on to Rose, who appeared to be but a slight thing within his grasp.

"Whar is he?" shouted 'Ziah, as he appeared suddenly along side; but scarcely had he the words uttered, when another rifle was discharged from the clump of trees, followed by a quick start from 'Ziah, and a sudden exclamation, sounding like "Jerusalem!" through his clenched teeth. Norwood had at last succeeded in tearing Rose from the grasp of his opponent, who, now seeing Sib and the others rushing from the hut, sprung upon Norwood with a yell of rage, and plunged his long knife into Rose's breast, who had sprung forward and received the blow intended for another. Jake for a moment appeared paralyzed with what he had done, and before he had recovered sufficient presence of mind to escape, he was felled to the ground by a blow from the butt of old Sib's rifle. All this had happened within a minute's time—it had scarcely commenced till it was over.

Norwood caught Rose in his arms, and pressing her to his bosom, as if by that means he would stop the gushing blood, rushed with her into the hut, calling wildly upon the Doctor to come quickly to his assistance. He bore her to her own little couch, and laying her gently down, supported her drooping head upon his breast. The Captain had succeeded in striking a light, and lighting a large pine-knot, ushered in the Doctor, who, upon Norwood's call, had hastened for his instruments, knowing that his professional assistance would be required; and he now approached with hasty steps, not knowing but that it was Norwood who had been wounded.

Rose lay still and quiet upon that fond resting-place, her large, soft eyes gazing upward into Norwood's, who, bending down, looked with an agonizing expression upon every light and shade of hers. The red blood was oozing slowly from the deep wound in her breast, and dropping in heavy drops from her body upon the matting on the floor. The Doctor bent down for a few moments, carefully probing the wound. Norwood's whole soul was in his glance, which now watched every movement of the Doctor; and when the latter raised himself, he saw in an instant that there was no hope—no life for her who had so nobly shielded his own. The bitter tears forced themselves from his eyes. Rose felt them dropping upon her face, and then she gave such a look, so full of gratitude, affection—unutterable affection—that he bent himself down upon her head and wept, in the very abandonment of agony. The Doctor was now carefully and tenderly stanching the blood;

and as he wrapped the bandage around her youthful breast, even the fountain of his feelings was touched, and a tear or two dropped upon his hands, as they moved intent upon their sad occupation.

The voice of old Sib was now distinguished in the outer apartment. He had as yet not heard of the sad event to his "Mountain Rose," as he often affectionately called her. The Captain, giving the torch into the Doctor's hand, slipped silently out, to break the heavy news as lightly as possible. In a few moments Sib was heard exclaiming:

"Where is she?—where is my child? I don't believe it. Let me go!" he continued, as if struggling to free himself from the Captain's detaining hand. "I will see her! Rose, Rose!" he called, as he appeared at the entrance to her little apartment. But here his eyes drank in the whole scene at a glance. He stopped, then advanced, and stopped again; while his eyes wandered wildly from Rose to Norwood, and from these to the face of the Doctor.

"Father!" said Rose, stretching her arms toward the bewildered old man.

That voice, and that mute action, still more expressive, recalled his bewildered mind.

"Rose!" he wildly exclaimed, darting forward and catching her in his arms—"what's the matter?" Then his eyes rested upon the white bandages on her breast, which were stained with the still-bleeding wound. "Who's done this?" he continued, looking frantically from one to the other. "Who's killed my child? Tell me! Rose, Rose!—won't you speak to me? Are you hurt? Don't you know me—your poor old Sib?"

"Come!" said the Doctor, now interposing, "your child is badly, dangerously wounded, and any excitement might kill her. You know me," he continued, as Sib gazed into his face, as if unconscious of his words and person; "I am now the surgeon of your Rose; and I say, if you are not quiet she will die!"

"Oh, I'll do any thing," said the old man, in a subdued and frightened voice, "if you'll only save my child! But I can't believe she's so badly hurt. She wouldn't leave me!—would you, Rose?" he continued, in a plaintive voice, bending his rough face to hers.

"Come, Sib, this won't do," said the Doctor, taking his hand. "You know she is badly wounded, and the least excitement might kill her. You must come with me. Quiet is every thing to her."

"I'll be quiet, Doctor—indeed I will!" pleaded old Sib, letting her lay back again on Norwood's breast. "Only let me stay here beside my child. Don't take me away. I'll sit here in the corner, where I can see and be near her, and I won't say a word!"

The old man was completely overcome. His voice, so strong and ringing, was now as plaintive as a child's. With a breaking heart he crouched himself in the corner, at the foot of Rose's couch, and there sat like a frozen sorrow, watching every movement of the Doctor, whom he supposed to have the life of Rose in his hands.

Rose had spoken but once, and that was when old Sib had first appeared. She lay so still, and her breathing was so low, that Norwood looked down several times, as if fearing that she was dead. The only thing that appeared to live were her eyes, and they ever wandered from Norwood to her "father" Sib—the only beings upon the broad earth that had ever seemed to love her, and the only ones that she did ever love.

The Captain now appeared at the entrance, and beckoned to the Doctor. 'Ziah had been wounded in the shoulder by a rifle-ball, and now needed his assistance. Giving a few directions to Norwood, he silently departed, and found 'Ziah badly, but not dangerously wounded. Fritz was there also. His cheek was pale, and his eyes, which continually looked toward one corner of the hut, had an almost ferocious expression. The object which he regarded with so much animosity was the person of Jake Cone, now lying bound hand and foot—the author of all this sad change upon his father's home.

The Doctor was apparently the only collected person among them. He kept moving silently and continually from one apartment to the other—now easing the position of 'Ziah, and again applying a sedative to the lips of Rose. All seemed to look upon him as the person in whose hands was the power of life and death.

The night dragged heavily onward. Rose had sunk into an uneasy slumber. Norwood now sat by her bedside, watching every breath she drew. It would be useless to describe his feelings—they were such as would leave their impress upon his young spirit during the many years of his after life. Sib sat crouching in his old posture, gazing vacantly upon his child. Every one was still and quiet. A shadow had settled upon their household—a deep, dark shadow. The sunlight and its gladness might come again to some, but could it smile on *all*? Sadness and sorrow, how quickly ye follow in the wake of joy! Where the sun gleams brightest, *there* is the greatest shadow. Light and darkness, joy and sorrow, ye are ever inseparable!

The long-looked-for day at last dawned. All had looked to it as the harbinger of good, yet why they knew not. Rose still slumbered on, but her mind was busy; and murmuring words came sometimes from her parted lips, and among them Norwood heard his own name oftenest.

When day had fairly opened, Sib rose softly up, and, as if bowed by a heavy weight, moved slowly out. Jake still lay in

the corner of the cabin, and Fritz still sat and watched, as if his eyes would blast him. Sib spoke not, but passing out of the hut, returned in a few moments with his rifle, which had been injured somewhat in the last night's fray. With a piece of buckskin he commenced mending the battered breach. Then, taking his powder-horn and bullet-pouch, he calmly and considerately proceeded to pour out the charge, and emptying it into the bore of his piece, placed a thin doe-skin patch over the muzzle, and over it was laid the ounce ball of lead; then, with his long wiping-stick he rammed it home. Jake eyed his every movement. His blanched cheek and quivering lip betrayed his fears.

Having finished loading his rifle, Sib went up to Jake, and stooping down, loosened the thongs that confined his feet. He gave a look toward Fritz which was perfectly understood. Raising the now almost stupefied body of Jake between them, they placed themselves one on each side, and thus supported, led him out of the hut. Without a word spoken, the two brought him to a large pine that stood the furthest of the clump of trees, and with a *cabresta* which Fritz had with him, bound the trembling body of Jake to the massive trunk. Jake was now conscious of their intentions. Giving a long, loud yell of agony, he begged and prayed most piteously for his life, calling upon his father with the most endearing terms; then, seeing no hope in his rigid countenance, turning to Fritz, and craving his assistance with the most abject language. Not a word did Sib utter. His eye was fixed and almost rayless, without a single spark of life or feeling, and his haggard and deeply-graven countenance seemed as cold and bloodless as a face of stone.

Their object being accomplished, the two turned their backs on the victim, whose cries were loud and heart-rending, and walked slowly back toward the hut, as if measuring their steps. Arrived almost at the door of the cabin, Sib stopped, turned, and giving one look toward his frantic son, raised his rifle—cocked it, and pointed it at the heart of that living target. His finger pressed the trigger—another instant, and life would have had no more joys or sorrows for Jake Cone: but the rifle is suddenly thrust from its deadly aim, and Sib finds himself clasped round the breast by Rose!—Rose, who had rushed from her couch at the dread shrieks of Jake, her murderer, and with the energy of a strong heart, had come in time to save him!

"Father," she cried, "you must not do it! He is your son—your only son! Harm him not! I know you will forgive him for my sake—your own Rose's sake! I am dying, father, but I will not die in peace unless you free him. You have never yet refused me any thing, you dear old man; and this is my last request!"

Sib was powerfully agitated during this time. His heart was touched—the rock was stricken—and the tears gushed freely

from his eyes. When Rose had done speaking, he caught her in his arms, and cried :

" You've saved him, Rose—no other living being could have saved him ! " Then turning to Fritz, whose sunburnt cheeks were moistened with tears, he said : " Fritz, go and loose him. An angel has interceded for him. Let him go when he likes ! "

As soon as Rose perceived the success of her prayers, the strength that had hitherto upborne her suddenly forsook her, and she sunk helpless upon the old man's breast. Norwood and the Doctor, from whom Rose had forcibly escaped, now urged Sib to hasten with her into the hut, which he did ; and placing her gently upon her little bed, crouched back into his former place, and continued looking with an almost idiot stare upon the Doctor, who was busily engaged endeavoring to recover her from her deathlike stupor. Norwood knew it would soon be over. Kneeling down, he buried his face in his hands, and gave full vent to his crushed feelings. The whole household had now gathered in, and stood silent and sad, gazing upon their dying favorite. 'Ziah was there also, his long and solemn countenance, pale with the effects of his own wound, moistened by his bitter tears. All were weeping but Sib. *His* heart was now a dead—a pulseless void. His feelings were all frozen by the intenseness of his woe ; and he looked upon the sad faces of those around him, and wondered what made *them* weep.

Rose was waking from her deathlike trance. Slowly, consciousness returned. Her eyes wandered inquiringly from face to face, until they settled upon Norwood. A sad, sweet smile played across her countenance as she saw his tearful eyes placed close to hers. Her lips moved, and her voice, still sweet though sinking to the lowest whisper, was heard by Norwood, saying :

" You won't leave me—will you ? "

" Never ! " exclaimed Norwood, clasping her to his heart.

She gave him one happy, grateful look, and his lips received the last breath of her who was too pure to live, and yet too young to die.

THE END.

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| Twenty Years Hence. Two females, one male. | A Hopeless Case. A Query in Verse. Two girls |
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| The Two Lecturers. For numerous males. | Solored Cousins. A Colloquy. For two males. |

DIME DIALOGUES No. 8.

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| Fairy School. For a number of girls. | Getting a Photograph. Males and females. |
| Enrolling Officer. Three girls and two boys. | The Society for General Improvement. For girls |
| Base-ball Enthusiast. For three boys. | A Nobleman in Disguise. Three girls, six boys |
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| The Figures. For several small children. | Ghosts. For ten females and one male. |
| The Trial of Peter Sloper. For seven boys. | |

DIME DIALOGUES No. 9.

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| Advertising for Help. For a number of females. | The Law of Human Kindness. For two females |
| America to England, Greeting. For two boys. | Spoiled Children. For a mixed School. |
| The Old and the New. Four females, one male. | Brutus and Cassius. |
| Choice of Trades. For twelve little boys. | Coriolanus and Aufidius. |
| The Lap-Dog. For two females. | The New Scholar. For a number of girls. |
| The Victim. For four females and one male. | The Self-made Man. For three males. |
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| The True Philosophy. For females and males. | Mrs. Lackland's Economy. 4 boys and 3 girls. |
| A Good Education. For two females. | Should Women be Given the Ballot? For boys. |

DIME DIALOGUES No. 10.

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| Mrs. Mark Twain's Shoe. One male, one female. | The Rehearsal. For a School. |
| The Old Flag. For three Boys. School Festival. | The True Way. For three boys and one girl. |
| The Court of Folly. For many girls. | A Practical Life Lesson. For three girls. |
| Great Lives. For six boys and six girls. | The Monk and the Soldier. For two boys. |
| Scandal. For numerous males and females. | 1776-1876. For two girls. School Festival. |
| The Light of Love. For two Boys. | Lord Dundreary's Visit. 2 males and 2 females. |
| The Flower Children. For twelve girls. | Witches in the Cream. Three girls and three boys |
| The Deaf Uncle. For three boys. | Frenchman. Charade. Numerous characters. |
| A Discussion. For two boys. | |

DIME DIALOGUES No. 11.

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| Appearances are very Deceitful. For six boys. | Fashionable Dissipation. For two little girls. |
| The Conundrum Family. For male and female. | A School Charade. For two boys and two girls |
| Curing Betsey. Three males and four females. | Jean Ingelow's "Songs of Seven." Seven girls |
| Jack and the Beanstalk. For five characters. | A Debate. For four boys. |
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| The Only True Life. For two girls. | A Very Questionable Story. For two boys. |
| Classic Colloquies. For two boys. | A Sell. For three males. |
| I. Gustavus Vasa and Cristiern. | The Real Gentleman. For two boys. |
| II. Tamerlane and Bajazet. | |

DIME DIALOGUES No. 12.

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| Unkee Assurance. For several characters. | A Family not to Pattern After. Ten characters |
| Orders Wanted. For several characters. | How to Man-age. An acting charade. |
| When I was Young. For two girls. | The Vacation Escapade. Four boys and teacher |
| The Most Precious Heritage. For two boys. | That Naughty Boy. Three females and a male |
| The Double Cure. Two males and four females. | Mad-cap. An Acting Charade. |
| The Flower-garden Fairies. For five little girls. | All is not Gold that Glitters. Acting Proverb. |
| Jemima's Novel. Three males and two females. | Sic Transit Gloria Mundi. Acting Charade. |
| Beware of the Widows. For three girls. | |

DIME DIALOGUES No. 13.

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| Two O'clock in the Morning. For three males. | Worth, not Wealth. For four boys and a teacher |
| An Indignation Meeting. For several females. | No such Word as Fail. For several males. |
| Before and Behind the Scenes. Several characters | The Sleeping Beauty. For a school. |
| The Noblest Boy. A number of boys and teacher | An Innocent Intrigue. Two males and a female |
| Blue Beard. A Dress Piece. For girls and boys. | Old Nabby, the Fortune-teller. For three girls. |
| Not so Bad as it Seems. For several characters. | Boy-talk. For several little boys. |
| A Curbstone Moral. For two males and female. | Mother is Dead. For several little girls. |
| Sense vs. Sentiment. For Parlor and Exhibition | A Practical Illustration. For two boys and girl |

DIME DIALOGUES No. 14.

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| <p>Mrs. Jonas Jones. Three gents and two ladies.
 The born genius. For four gents.
 More than one listener. For four gents and lady.
 Who on airth is he? For three girls.
 The right not to be a pauper For two boys.
 Woman nature will out. For a girls' school.
 Benedict and Bachelor. For two boys.
 The cost of a dress. For five persons.
 The surprise party. For six little girls.
 A practical demonstration. For three boys.</p> | <p>Refinement. Acting charade. Several characters.
 Conscience the arbiter. For lady and gentleman.
 How to make mothers happy. For two girls.
 A conclusive argument. For two boys and a girl.
 A won't and a should. For three girls.
 Rum's ruin. (Temperance.) For four gents.
 The fatal mistake. For two young ladies.
 Eyes and nose. For one gent and one lady.
 Retribution. For a number of boys.</p> |
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DIME DIALOGUES No. 15.

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| <p>The Fairies' Escapade. Numerous characters.
 Poet's Perplexities. For six gentlemen.
 A Home Cure. For two ladies and one gent.
 The Good there is in Each. A number of boys.
 Gentleman or Monkey. For two boys.
 The Little Philosopher. For two little girls.
 Aunt Polly's Lesson. For four ladies.
 A Wild-fall. Acting Charade. For a number.
 Will it Pay? For two boys.</p> | <p>The Heir-at-Law. For numerous males.
 Don't Believe What You Hear. For three ladies.
 A Safety Rule. For three ladies.
 The Chief's Resolve. Extract. For two males.
 Testing her Friends. For several characters.
 The Foreigner's Troubles. For two ladies.
 The Cat Without an Owner. Several characters.
 Natural Selection. For three gentlemen.</p> |
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DIME DIALOGUES No. 16.

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| <p>Polly Ann. For four ladies and one gentleman.
 The Meeting of the Winds. For a school.
 The Good They Did. For six ladies.
 The Boy Who Wins. For six gentlemen.
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